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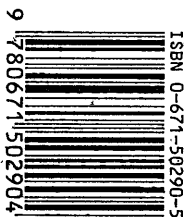
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EAN

## GRAVE DANGER

"The way I figure it, you will die in one of three ways," Krieger said. His voice was eerily calm, as though he were discussing what to have for dinner. "One, you will die of suffocation. Two, you will die of hunger or thirst. Three, you will die of fright."

With that, Krieger lifted the lid off one of the coffins. A cloud of dust rose into the air, and the friction of stone against stone made a loud grinding sound. The inside of the coffin was empty.

Helpless, Nancy watched as Krieger and Mahfouz put Darius, then Frank, then Leila into the coffins and closed them up.

Then Mahfouz lifted Nancy and lowered her into the last coffin. She winced as her bare legs and arms touched the cold, clammy stone. Then he set the lid on top and slid it into place, erasing the last bit of light and sealing her in total darkness. . . .

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# **Nancy Drew AND Hardy Boys SUPER MYSTERY™**

## **SECRETS OF THE NILE**

**Carolyn Keene**



**AN ARCHWAY PAPERBACK**

**Published by POCKET BOOKS**

**New York London Toronto Sydney Tokyo Singapore**



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# Chapter

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# One

**N**ANCY, IT'S FRANK. Can you give me a call at home ASAP? Thanks."

Nancy Drew frowned as she listened to the message on her answering machine. She wondered what was going on with her old friend Frank Hardy; his usually calm voice had an uncharacteristic edge of urgency to it.

After peeling off her blue parka, Nancy picked up the phone and dialed Frank's number, which she knew by heart. As she waited for him to answer, she cupped her hands together and blew on them; she'd just finished a brisk five-mile walk, and the November chill seemed to have seeped deep into her bones.

Frank picked up on the second ring. "Hello?"

"Frank, it's Nancy."

"Nancy." She heard him breathe a small sigh of relief. "Boy, am I glad you called. I was worried that you might be out of town or something."

"Let me guess—this is about a case, right?" Nancy said immediately.

Frank chuckled. "I can't get anything by you, can I?" Frank and his brother, Joe, were amateur detectives, as was Nancy. In the past the three of them had helped one another out on numerous assignments, from breaking up an industrial espionage scheme at the FBI Academy in Quantico to uncovering a cache of Nazi gold in Amsterdam.

Nancy sat down on her bed, crossed her slender legs, and switched the phone from one ear to the other. "So what is it, Hardy? A smuggling ring? Extortionists? Jewel thieves?"

"None of the above. The deal is, I'd like you to go to Egypt with me."

"Egypt!" Nancy exclaimed. "Sounds great—when?"

"Soon. Like tomorrow. The flight leaves at six-thirty in the evening from John F. Kennedy."

"Tomorrow." Nancy glanced at her alarm clock: it was ten after one. That gave her a

little over twenty-four hours to pack, get her documents together, and grab a flight from Chicago to New York.

"I know it's short notice," Frank said, "but something just came up, and I really, really need your help."

"Hey, wait a second," Nancy said. "First you say it's for a case, then you say you just want me to go to Egypt with you, and now you say you need my help. Which is it?"

"Both—no, all of the above. I do need your help, and we also need Bess, if she's free." Bess Marvin was one of Nancy's two closest friends.

"I'll have to ask her if she's up for it," Nancy said. "And who's this 'we'? I assume Joe's going, too."

"Yep. You got it."

"So what *is* this assignment? I'm dying to know."

Frank hesitated before replying. "The assignment is—you and I have to, um, pose as newlyweds. And Joe and Bess, too."

"*What?*" Nancy almost dropped the phone.

"Nancy? Hello? Nancy, are you there?"

Nancy took a deep breath, repositioned the handset, and said, "I'm still here. What do you mean, we have to pose as newlyweds?"

"I'll explain," Frank said quickly. "See, earlier today Joe and I were contacted by a

State Department agent named Jonathan Kimball. He asked us to impersonate a pair of brothers named Cole and Cooper Addison."

"Go on," Nancy said, intrigued.

"Cole and Cooper are getting married in a double wedding ceremony tomorrow, and they're planning to take their wives to Egypt for their honeymoon," Frank continued.

"That is, until the State Department got a tip that some members of the Hâjji planned to kidnap the brothers in Cairo and hold them for ransom."

"The Hâjji?" Nancy repeated. "Who are the Hâjji?"

"A brand-new terrorist outfit. Kimball said they operate mainly in Egypt, preying on American tourists. The State Department is really eager to flush them out, but so far they have too little information about them."

"Why would the Hâjji be interested in the Addison brothers?" Nancy asked.

"Their dad, Charles Addison, is a big-shot international banker, one of the richest men in New York. The family used to live in Cairo. The Hâjji could get a lot of money out of him."

Nancy fell silent as she digested this information. Then a thought came to her. "I think I know what the assignment is," she said slowly.

"The Addisons and their wives are going to honeymoon someplace else, and the four of us—you, Joe, Bess, and I—are going to take their places in Cairo. The Hâjji won't know the difference, and they'll start scouting us out, and as soon as they do, some State Department agents will close in on them."

Frank laughed softly. "Right as usual, Nancy. See, Kimball wants us because we're detectives. Also, according to him, I look like Cole, and Joe looks like Cooper. I thought of you two to play the women because Cole's fiancée, Rebecca, is tall with reddish blond hair, and Cooper's fiancée, Nikki, is shorter, with long blond hair." His voice turned serious as he added, "Listen, Nancy, this might be dangerous, even though Kimball's promised us that he'll have a dozen agents watching us at all times. I want you and Bess to know that before you agree to sign on."

Nancy didn't reply. She was used to being in dangerous situations. What she was really worried about was a totally different kind of danger.

She and Frank had always been attracted to each other; they'd even shared a passionate kiss once, when they were working together on a case. They were both dating other people, though: Nancy had her boyfriend, Ned

Nickerson, and Frank had his girlfriend, Callie Shaw. Would she and Frank be able to handle posing as a couple—and a married couple, at that? Nancy wondered.

As if reading her mind, Frank cleared his throat and said, "Hey, Nancy? If the thing about playing my wife bothers you, well—"

"Oh, no," Nancy said quickly. "I'm fine with that. Really." Before he could say anything else, she said, "Let me talk to Bess and call you back, okay? I also have to clear it with my dad."

"Great," Frank said eagerly. "Listen, if you and Bess are on, you're going to have to move fast. You need to get passport pictures taken, then send them to New York by overnight mail. Kimball's going to have fake passports made for you, and visas, too. Oh, and don't worry about packing. Kimball's going to take care of that. He wants us to look like the Addisons and their wives as much as possible, so we're all getting brand-new wardrobes."

"Wait till I tell Bess about that," Nancy said, with a laugh. "If she loves the clothes, she'll love the assignment, but if she doesn't—watch out."

Restless, Joe Hardy glanced around the crowded airport restaurant, then at his watch,

then at Frank, who was sitting across the table from him. It was the twelfth time his eyes had made that same circuit in the last five minutes. "They should have been here by now," he muttered.

"They'll be here," Frank said calmly. He took a long sip of his coffee, which was surprisingly good. "Nancy said their flight would get in at four, and it's only ten past."

Joe frowned, then shifted uncomfortably in his seat. The tiny booth wasn't quite big enough to accommodate his husky build.

Just then a pretty red-haired waitress came by. "Refills?" she asked, holding up a pot of coffee. She smiled at Frank and then at Joe, and her smile seemed to linger on him.

"No, thanks," Frank said before Joe had a chance to reply. "We're kind of caffeined out."

When the waitress had drifted away, Joe said, "Hey, why did you chase her away? I think she liked me."

"You're a married man now, remember?" Frank reminded him with a twinkle in his dark brown eyes. "You've got to start playing the part, and that means no checking out other girls."

"I knew I shouldn't have agreed to this assignment," Joe complained, running a hand through his blond hair.



"Frank. Joe."

Frank glanced up. Nancy was heading in their direction, followed by Bess. When Nancy reached their table Frank stood up and gave her a big hug. He held her for a moment longer than necessary, but he couldn't help himself. He'd always had special feelings for her.

When he finally stepped back, he grinned at her and said, "Hey, you'd better get used to calling us Cole and Cooper."

Nancy made a face. "Whoops, you're right. Hi, Cole and Cooper."

Bess slipped into the booth next to Joe and tossed her long blond hair back over her shoulders. "Before we go on, I have a major complaint. What's with this guy Kendall—"

"Kimball," Joe corrected her.

"Kimball saying I couldn't bring anything but a small overnight bag with makeup and shampoo and stuff? I mean, who does he think he is, picking out my clothes for me? What if I have to spend the whole trip in polyester pantsuits?" Bess shuddered dramatically. "I refuse to go if I have to wear polyester pantsuits."

"I'm sure the clothes won't be so bad," Frank told her. "And speaking of Kimball"—he looked at his watch—"we're supposed to rendezvous with him at four-fifteen near the ticket counter. We'd better move it."

Joe put some money on the table, and he and Frank grabbed their overnight bags. Then the four of them left the restaurant. As they walked down the busy airport corridor to the Air Egypt counter, Frank leaned over to Nancy and said, "I'm glad you and Bess were able to come, especially at the last minute."

"Me, too," Nancy told him. Then she lowered her voice and added, "Isn't it a little risky meeting Kimball in public? I mean, what if the Hâjji have agents here?"

"Kimball doesn't think they have anyone in the States," Frank replied. "But just in case, he'll be in disguise."

"What kind of disguise?" Nancy asked.

"I'm not sure—" Frank began, but he was cut off by the sound of a deep male voice.

"Mr. and Mrs. Cole Addison? Mr. and Mrs. Cooper Addison?"

Frank and Nancy stopped in their tracks, as did Joe and Bess. Coming toward them was a baggage carrier pushing half a dozen leather suitcases on a cart.

Frank stared at the baggage carrier closely. He was forty or so, with silvery black hair, cool gray eyes, and a rugged, tanned face with a triangular scar on his left cheek. It was Kimball, Frank realized—although he had to admit that in his coveralls and cap, the State Department agent looked radically different

from the man who'd shown up at the Hardys' house the morning before.

Before Frank could reply, Kimball stepped toward him and said, "I have your bags and documents, Mr. Addison, sir." Then he reached into his pocket and retrieved a fat manila envelope. On it were scribbled the words "For Cole Addison: Personal and Confidential."

Kimball handed the envelope to Frank. "This has everything you'll need," he added in a whisper. "Tickets, passports, and visas, wedding rings, your hotel information, and spending money in both U.S. dollars and Egyptian pounds. There are also brief bios of the characters you're going to play, which I want you to study and destroy as soon as possible."

"If there's a problem, can we call you at the State Department?" Frank asked him.

Kimball narrowed his eyes. "Absolutely not. I don't want the Hâjji to be able to trace you to me—it'd be too dangerous. If there are any complications, one of my agents in Cairo will make contact with you."

"But—" Joe spoke up.

Kimball tugged his cap lower over his eyes and began pushing the luggage cart toward the ticket counter. "Please," he said firmly. "No more questions. We must get moving."

Frank, Joe, Nancy, and Bess exchanged puz-

zled glances. Frank shrugged, and the four of them followed Kimball.

When they got to the Air Egypt ticket counter, they were greeted by a friendly-looking clerk. "Your tickets and passports, please," she said.

Frank reached into the manila envelope and handed her the necessary items. He noticed that the tickets were in first class. In the meantime Kimball was unloading the suitcases—all leather and monogrammed in gold, Frank observed.

When Kimball was finished, Joe dug into his pocket and handed him a ten-dollar bill. "Here you go, my good man," he said pleasantly.

Kimball acted bewildered but took the money, anyway. "Uh, thank you, sir," he said. "If that's all, I'll be going now." And with that, he disappeared into the crowd with his now-empty cart.

Joe leaned toward Frank and whispered, "Smooth touch, huh?"

"Yeah, real smooth," Frank told him. "I'd think about cutting the 'my good man' act, though."

"Is this your first trip to Egypt, Mr. Addison?"

Frank whirled around. The clerk was smiling at him, waiting for a reply. He tried to stay

calm while he searched his brain for information on Cole Addison.

"Um, no," he said after a moment. "My brother and I lived there when we were children. Our father used to work in Cairo." He turned to Nancy and put his arm around her, and she leaned toward him ever so slightly. "That's why this trip is so special. Cooper and I want to show our wives where we spent our childhoods."

"Oh, that's so sweet," the clerk said approvingly. Then she turned her attention to the passports and tickets. Frank watched her closely as she did this. Would the documents pass muster? he wondered, then laughed at himself. The passports were made by the State Department. They'd have to be perfect, wouldn't they? He didn't mind going under cover, but he wasn't crazy about traveling to a foreign country under an assumed name.

After checking in the luggage, the clerk handed the documents back to Frank. "Enjoy your trip," she said. "You can proceed to gate fourteen-B."

"Thank you." Frank tried not to look too relieved. "Come on, gang."

As the foursome started toward the gate, Bess said, "That Kimball's kind of weird, if you ask me."

"He reminds me of a character in some spy

movie," Joe said with a grin. "The disguise, the secrecy, and that bizarre scar . . ."

Frank was studying the contents of the manila envelope. "Well, he's generous, anyway," he said slowly. "First-class tickets, and unless I'm wrong, there's a whole lot of cash in here."

"Yes!" Bess cried out triumphantly. "That means that if the clothes he bought for me are really disgusting, I can buy new ones in Cairo." Then she pointed to a long line of people in the middle of the corridor. "Hey, what's going on?"

Frank peered over her head. "It's the security check," he replied. "I hope it doesn't take forever."

Frank and the others joined the line and waited. After a while Nancy leaned over to Frank and whispered, "See that guy?"

"What guy?" Frank asked her.

"Don't look. He's leaning against the wall behind you reading the *International Herald-Tribune*. Burly, wearing a gray suit. He's staring at us."

Frank bent down to tie his shoelaces, then got up and glanced at the man. Nancy was right; there was a guy checking them out. He was about five feet eleven, in his late thirties, with dark curly hair, a beard, and a mustache. His face was half hidden behind the newspaper. Frank caught his eye for just a second and

didn't like what he saw. There was something cold and menacing about him: he had the eyes of a killer.

He turned back to Nancy and put his arm around her. "Smile as if I'm telling you something really funny," he told her. Nancy smiled automatically. "You're right—that guy is scoping us out," he went on. "I'm hoping he's one of the State Department agents Kimball told us about."

"Me, too." Nancy continued to smile, but her voice was full of tension. "But what if it's one of the Hâjji? Maybe we're not even going to make it out of New York."

Frank was silent as he considered this. Kimball had seemed fairly certain that there weren't any Hâjji agents in New York. What if he was wrong?

"Look alive, Frank—we're up."

Frank turned around. They'd gotten to the front of the line, and Joe had put his and Bess's overnight bags on the X-ray belt. Frank noticed that the bearded guy had suddenly become very alert; he'd put down his paper and was moving closer to the foursome.

Joe seemed to have noticed the bearded guy, too. "Is he a friend of ours or something?" he whispered to Frank.

"I don't think so," Frank whispered back. "He's been watching us for the last few min-

utes, though. Nancy's afraid he might be a Hâjji agent."

Just then a security official held his hand out to Joe. "Your passport, please," he said gruffly.

"Um, is there a problem?" Joe asked.

"Your passport, please—*now*."

Joe glanced at Frank quickly. Had their phony identities been discovered already?



# Chapter

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## Two

**F**RANK HANDED the security official Joe's passport. The official glared at him suspiciously, then began flipping through its pages.

Then another security official came over. "I need to look through that bag," she said, picking up Joe's overnight bag. "Will you follow me, please?"

"What's going on?" Bess whispered to Nancy.

"I have no idea," Nancy said.

The woman had put Joe's bag on a table off to the side. She opened it and began to sort through its contents methodically.

"Hey, wait a second!" Joe exclaimed as the

woman pulled out a pair of red boxer shorts. "Is that really necessary?"

The security official didn't reply, but continued rummaging through the bag. After a moment she pulled out a large, asymmetrical bottle. "This is all it was, Phil," she called out to the other security official. "Aftershave. Some fancy designer brand."

The security official named Phil snapped Joe's passport shut and handed it back to him. "We have to make sure of these things, you know," he said in the same gruff tone.

"Make sure of what? You thought my aftershave was a bomb or something?" Joe said incredulously. "Do I look like the bomb-smuggling type, Phil?"

"There's no such thing as a bomb-smuggling type, Mr. Addison," Phil told him curtly. "We've seen all types."

Frank stepped forward and smiled at Phil. "My brother and I know that you were just doing your job. Right, Coop?" He shot Joe a dirty look, hoping to stop him from arguing further with the security guard. They were working on a highly sensitive case with phony IDs, and the last thing they needed was to draw attention to themselves.

The four of them completed their security checks without further incident and moved

on. Then suddenly Frank remembered the burly, bearded guy who'd been watching them. He glanced back toward the security check area and scanned the crowd.

The man had disappeared.

The flight attendant handed Joe and Bess two elegant-looking menus in leather folders. "Here are your dinner selections. I'll be back to take your orders." Then she moved across the aisle to where Frank and Nancy were sitting.

Joe studied his menu. "Roast duckling with raspberry and shallot glaze. Fillet of sole with chervil beurre blanc. Don't they have any plain old hamburgers?"

Bess elbowed him in the ribs. "We're flying first-class, dummy—I mean, darling. Get used to it." She smiled dreamily at her menu. "They have shrimp cocktail. I *love* shrimp cocktail."

Just then Frank leaned across the aisle. "Hi, guys—having fun?"

"Definitely," Bess replied cheerfully. "I think I'll fly first-class from now on."

Frank extended a folded-up newspaper to Joe. "By the way, here's the sports page."

Joe frowned in confusion. He'd already read the sports page, and his brother knew that. They'd had a long discussion about one of the

lead articles over breakfast. "Your memory is going, right? You know perfectly well that I—"

Frank shoved the paper in Joe's hand and shot him a steely glance. "Take a close look," he hissed.

Puzzled, Joe opened the paper. Tucked inside were several documents—the biographies of Cole, Cooper, Rebecca, and Nikki—and two small velvet boxes.

"Oh, *that* sports page," Joe said loudly. "I didn't understand you at first. Okay, well, thanks."

Frank chuckled and shook his head, then settled back in his seat.

"Gimme." Bess grabbed the velvet boxes from Joe and opened them. Inside one were two plain gold bands; inside the other was an engagement ring, a glittering pear-shaped diamond surrounded by tiny sapphires.

She slipped the engagement ring on her finger, then stretched out her hand to admire it. "It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen." She sighed. "We get to keep these, right?"

"Yeah, right," Joe replied. "Get real." He was having trouble forcing his wedding band onto his ring finger. "This thing is way too tight."

"I think you're trying mine on," Bess said, giggling. "Take the other one."

After Joe had gotten his ring on, he started reading the bios. After a moment he scrunched down in his seat and bent his head toward Bess. "Let's see—according to this, you're a twenty-year-old phys ed major," he said in a low voice. "Your specialty is track and field. You ran in the New York City marathon last year."

"The New York City marathon?" Bess repeated in amazement. "Me? No way." Then she narrowed her eyes. "I'm not going to have to do any running on this case, am I? Because if I am, I'm quitting right now."

"Don't worry about it," Joe told her lightly, then continued scanning the bios. "I'm twenty-one, an economics major, and my hobbies are chess and bridge." He wrinkled his nose. "Chess and bridge? I hope I'm not going to have to play anyone in Cairo, or I'm dead meat."

Joe read on. Frank—or rather, Cole—was twenty-two. Having graduated from college six months earlier with a degree in urban policy, he was currently interning at the McKenzie Institute, a political think tank in downtown Manhattan. Rebecca, whom Nancy was im-

personating, was twenty and studying comparative literature. She spoke German and Italian fluently, and her hobbies were skiing and sailing. Like Cole, Cooper, and Nikki, Rebecca was from a wealthy and prominent family and was accustomed to a life of luxury: good schools, designer clothes, expensive cars, vacations abroad.

The flight attendant came by to take their dinner orders, and a few minutes later she returned with the first course: shrimp cocktail for Joe and Bess, smoked salmon for Frank, and crudités for Nancy. Joe decided to get up and wash his hands before eating. He also wanted to get rid of the bios, as Kimball had ordered, and he figured the rest room was as good a place as any.

He rolled the bios up together and rose from his seat. "I'll be right back, okay?" he said to Bess.

Bess, who had put on a set of headphones, frowned at him. "What?" she said loudly. Then her face lit up and she began tapping her feet. "Oh, I love this song."

Joe shook his head, then crossed the aisle to where Frank and Nancy were sitting. He tapped the rolled-up bios lightly against one palm and whispered, "I can lose these now, right?"

"Right," Frank whispered back. "Any ideas?"

"Leave it to me," Joe replied, then headed down the aisle.

The rest room in the first-class section was occupied, so he headed back into the coach section. He noted that the plane was totally full; there wasn't an empty seat.

All of a sudden the plane made a dipping motion, and Joe lost his balance. He clutched the back of someone's seat to steady himself, then moved on.

Seconds later a flight attendant's voice came over the loudspeaker: "Ladies and gentlemen, we are experiencing some temporary turbulence. Please return to your seats and fasten your seat belts." Then the message was repeated in French and Arabic.

Joe started to turn around, then glanced at the bios in his hand and changed his mind. The rest room was only a few rows ahead, and he really wanted to get rid of the incriminating documents.

But just then the plane made another, more dramatic dipping motion, catching Joe off guard. "Whoa!" he yelled, and went flying into the lap of one of the passenger.

He dropped the bios, and they unrolled and scattered. "I'm sorry," Joe began apologetically, trying to gather the papers and get back

on his feet at the same time. Then he caught sight of the person he'd landed upon.

Joe tried to hide his shock. It was the big bearded guy who'd been checking them out at JFK—the one Nancy thought might be a Hâjji agent.



# Chapter

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# Three

**T**HE BEARDED GUY glared at Joe, then reached over to pick up one of the papers that was lying beside his feet. Joe felt a surge of panic; he couldn't let the guy see the bios, or their cover might be blown.

Joe grabbed the paper out of the guy's hand. "Uh, that's kind of personal," he said quickly. "You know, it's a letter—from my, um, wife."

The bearded guy continued to glare at Joe but said nothing. Joe picked up the other papers hastily, mumbled another apology, and started toward the rest room. Once there, he ripped the bios to shreds and flushed them down the toilet.

"That was *way* too close," he said out loud

to himself, then returned to his seat. Bess was still listening to music on her headphones and eating her shrimp cocktail. Frank and Nancy were deep in conversation.

When he saw his brother, Frank leaned across the aisle and whispered, "What took you so long?"

"You're not going to believe this," Joe began, and told him and Nancy about the bearded guy.

When he'd finished, Nancy was frowning. "I don't like this at all. Maybe he's following us."

"But maybe he's a State Department agent and is supposed to be following us," Frank said quietly. "Or maybe he's not connected to this case at all, and it's just a coincidence that we keep running into him."

"Maybe," Joe agreed, but his gut instinct told him that this wasn't the last time they'd be seeing the bearded guy.

"This is amazing," Bess said, pressing her face up against the dusty taxi window. "I think it's the most amazing place I've ever seen."

She, Joe, Frank, and Nancy had arrived at Cairo Airport an hour earlier and were now making their way through Cairo to their hotel. The flight had been a long, tiring one, and they were disoriented by the vast time difference—it was 2 P.M. local time, but 7 A.M. the same day

A Nancy Drew & Hardy Boys SuperMystery  
in New York. Their fatigue didn't keep them from appreciating the incredible scenery, though.

Nancy thought that Cairo was a remarkable combination of the ancient and the new. Alongside the twenty-four-hour convenience stores and the movie theaters with flashing neon lights were seventh-century mosques surrounded by crumbling other walls, cemeteries, and mud-brick houses with laundry flapping on the roofs. On the busy street there were as many camels and donkeys with packs strapped across their backs as there were cars and bikes. Nancy also noticed that while most people wore Western-style clothes, there were many in traditional Islamic dress: cotton galabias and turbans for the men, caftans and veils for the women.

Joe, who was sitting in the front seat with the driver, rolled the window down slightly. A warm, dusty breeze blew in, carrying with it the mingled scents of incense and spiced meats. "I can't believe it's November," he said appreciatively. "It feels like summer."

"Are we almost there?" Nancy asked the driver.

"Very soon," the driver replied in heavily accented English. Nancy was relieved that many Egyptians spoke English. That was bound to make their trip easier.

The taxi crawled to a halt to let a woman cross the street. She was pushing a cart brimming with melons and pomegranates. Just then a group of children came running up to the taxi and began banging on the windows, shouting, "Baksheesh. Baksheesh!"

"*Imshi!*" the driver shouted, waving his hands angrily.

Joe turned to the driver. "What do those kids want?"

"They want money," the driver replied. "*Imshi!*" he repeated, shaking a fist at the children.

Bess reached into her purse and fished out some coins. "I have some spare change from when I bought those guidebooks at the airport," she said, and handed the coins out the window. The children scooped them up eagerly, thanked Bess, and ran away.

Fifteen minutes later they reached the Grand Hotel Mistr, where Kimball had made reservations for the Addisons. Nestled on the banks of the Nile, it was an old palace that had been converted into a hotel. In the center of the entry garden was a stone fountain surrounded by columns, and scattered here and there were eucalyptus and palm trees.

"Pretty cool," Joe remarked to Frank as they got out of the cab.

The hotel's interior proved to be even more

grand than the outside. The vast lobby boasted high gilded ceilings, huge Oriental chandeliers, Egyptian tapestries and objets d'art, and an enormous marble staircase. Nancy had never seen anything like it.

She, Bess, Frank, and Joe headed for the front desk, where they were greeted by a slender clerk with a pencil-thin mustache. "We're the Addisons," Frank told him.

The clerk nodded, then typed something into a computer. "Ah, yes, we have been expecting you," he said after a moment. "Your reservations are for the two adjoining suites in our tower annex. I think you will be most comfortable there." He glanced at Nancy and Bess and added, "These are your lovely brides?"

Frank reached for Nancy's hand. She felt her cheeks grow warm; Frank's touch had that effect on her.

"Yes, this is my wife, Rebecca," Frank said. "And this"—he nodded at Bess—"is my brother's wife, Nikki." Bess grabbed Joe's hand and smiled brightly at the clerk.

"I congratulate you all on your marriages," the clerk said enthusiastically. "Now I must have your passports. They will be returned to you tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?" Nancy said, confused. "I don't understand."

"It is Egyptian law. Tourists must surrender their passports for twenty-four hours." They all handed the clerk their passports. The man turned and clapped his hands, whereupon a young dark-haired boy suddenly materialized. "Ahmed will show you to your rooms."

Five minutes later Nancy and her friends were standing in the middle of a lavish suite decorated with Egyptian antiques and Oriental rugs. The window, which spanned the length of the spacious room, offered a view of the city, the Nile, and the edge of the desert beyond. "This is beautiful," Nancy said, a little awestruck.

Bess walked over to a huge basket of fruit that was sitting on the carved mahogany coffee table. She picked out a fig and popped it into her mouth. "I could get used to this," she murmured.

"The other bedroom is through there," Ahmed said, nodding toward a set of double doors. "Shall I take some of the bags in there?"

"Um, no, we'll do that," Frank said quickly. He reached into his pocket and handed the bellboy a tip. "Thanks. We'll be fine now."

After Ahmed left the room, Bess turned to the others and said, "I don't know about you guys, but I'm exhausted. I need a nap."

"I'm beat, too," Frank said. "But I think we

A Nancy Drew & Hardy Boys SuperMystery  
should change and head out and go to bed  
relatively early tonight."

"Head out where?" Nancy asked him.

Frank sat down on the red silk couch. "I thought maybe to Giza, to see the Sphinx and the Pyramids. That seems like the sort of place two honeymooning couples would go." He added, "Kimball told us that we're supposed to go out and be seen as much as possible. You know, so that the Hâjji will have a chance to spot us."

"Oh, yeah," Bess said darkly. "I forgot that we're supposed to be decoys for a bunch of terrorists."

"I know—it's weird, isn't it?" Nancy murmured. She walked over to the window and stared down at the hotel's pool and gardens, at the graceful white feluccas sailing down the Nile. Were the Hâjji already onto their presence in the city? she wondered pensively. Were they going to make their move on Frank and Joe at any minute? And was the mysterious bearded guy involved somehow?

Just then she felt a hand on her shoulder. She turned around and found herself staring up into Frank's handsome face. "Are you all right?" he asked her quietly.

Frank was standing very close to her, and Nancy could feel her heart beating a little

faster. Stop it, Drew, she told herself sternly. Stick to business.

She cleared her throat. "I was just thinking about the Hâjji. You did say that Kimball was going to have agents watching us at all times, didn't you? So there's no way the Hâjji can make a move on you and Joe, right?"

"Right," Frank said, nodding. Nancy thought she detected just a hint of uncertainty in his brown eyes, but it was gone in a flash. The next thing she knew, he was grinning at her. "Listen, nothing's going to happen to us. Let's change into our Addison clothes so we can hit the town, okay?"

"In many ways the Sphinx—known in Arabic as Abu-al-Hul, "the father of terror"—is a mystery. The majority of Egyptologists think it was built by the pharaoh Chephren in 2500 B.C., but a growing body of evidence suggests that it was built much earlier, by an unknown person for some unknown purpose."

Restless, Joe shifted from one foot to the other as the tour guide, a tiny gray-haired Englishwoman named Mrs. Peabody, addressed the crowd. Signing up for the tour had been Frank's idea, but Joe hated tours. He would much rather have gone sight-seeing alone, with no one telling them where to go or holding them back with boring little speeches.



He felt a tap on his arm. Bess was pointing at the Sphinx. "Isn't it awesome?" she whispered.

Joe nodded. It was an awesome sight—190 feet long, 66 feet tall at its highest point, with the body of a lion and the head of a human. Beyond it were the Pyramids and then the desert: an infinite field of hot, dry golden brown sand.

Then Joe's gaze moved to Frank and Nancy, who were standing at the front of Mrs. Peabody's group. They were dressed in the clothes Kimball had given them: Frank in a beige linen suit and white cotton shirt, Nancy in an elegant green dress. They were holding hands and whispering to each other, and for a moment Joe was almost convinced that they were a married couple.

Good, he thought. At least *they'll* fool the Hâjji.

He wasn't so sure about Bess and himself, though. First of all, he really resented having to wear a suit. Having had to wear a sports jacket on the plane had been bad enough, but he was totally uncomfortable in a suit. The Hâjji were bound to know he was a fake.

Also, he and Bess—who, unlike him, absolutely loved her expensive, dressy clothes—kept forgetting to hold hands and act like a

couple. They were both too busy scoping out all the cute teens in their tour group.

Just then Bess grabbed his arm. "J—I mean, Cooper," she whispered. "See that guy standing behind the Sphinx's right paw?"

"Um, I really don't want to hear about another one of your hunk sightings, Nikki," Joe said impatiently.

Bess shook her head. "No, that's not it. This guy has been staring at us for, like, the last five—" Then she stopped abruptly. "Hey, he's gone."

Joe looked up. No one was standing behind the Sphinx's right paw, or anywhere in that vicinity. He turned to Bess. "What did he look like?"

Bess shrugged. "I couldn't see him clearly. He was standing in the shadows. But I could tell he was watching us."

"If you'll all move this way, we'll take a look at the funerary temple adjoining the Sphinx," Mrs. Peabody said loudly. "Then we'll go on to the Great Pyramid." She threw Joe and Bess a disapproving glance, seeming to sense that they weren't paying attention to her.

As the crowd followed Mrs. Peabody, Frank and Nancy hung back to wait for Joe and Bess. "Having fun, kids?" Frank called out.

Joe told him and Nancy about the guy Bess

had seen. "You don't think it could be our bearded friend, do you?" he finished tensely. "Should we look around for him?"

"Bearded friend? What bearded friend?" Bess demanded.

Nancy explained quickly, then turned to the Hardys and added, "I think we should continue with the tour. The guy Bess saw could be a Hâjji agent, or there could be other Hâjji agents around. We have to act natural, or we'll look suspicious."

"I think you're right," Frank told her. "Come on, let's catch up with Mrs. Peabody."

As Joe trailed Frank, Nancy, and Bess to the funerary temple, he glanced around at the crowd. A dozen tourists who weren't with the sight-seeing group were lingering around the Sphinx. Were any of them State Department agents or Hâjji members? Joe wondered. Was this going to be the site of their big showdown? And just who was the guy Bess had seen?

By the time the tour was over, nothing had happened; no terrorists had made a move on Frank or Joe. The foursome decided to take a cab back to the hotel, then go out for an early dinner.

The sun was casting a golden pink glow across the desert sky behind the Sphinx and the Great Pyramid as the cab pulled away. "I

hope we can come back here before our trip is over," Nancy said, glancing wistfully over her shoulder. "We didn't stay nearly long enough, and it's such an incredible place."

They got to the hotel about half an hour later. Joe was dying to get out of his suit and into some jeans and a T-shirt, but he knew that was impossible. Cooper had a taste for expensive fancy clothes. Plus, Joe knew the suit made him look older, making up the four-year gap in his and twenty-one-year-old Cooper's ages.

"Where should we go for dinner?" Joe asked as they got off the elevator and headed for their rooms.

"I was thinking about checking out one of the restaurants in the Old Cairo district," Frank said. He fished his keys out of his pocket, opened the door, and flicked on the light. "Maybe we could try a place that serves—" Abruptly he stopped speaking.

Joe sensed immediately that something was wrong. He opened the door wider and stepped into the room, next to Frank.

Then he saw that furniture had been overturned and pillows had been slashed.

Someone had broken into their suite.

# Chapter

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# Four

**T**HE HÂJJI! Joé thought angrily. "They're not getting away with this," he muttered as he started across the room.

Frank grabbed his arm. "They might still be here," he hissed. "We've got to be careful."

Nancy joined Frank and Joe. "There's no one in the hall," she whispered. "If Hâjji agents are around, then where are the State Department agents?"

Bess turned around and started marching toward the elevator. "I'm getting out of here," she announced. "This is way too weird."

"Wait a second," Frank called out to her. "We need to stay together. We'll be safer that way."

Frank and Joe decided to search the place while Nancy and Bess remained at the door and checked out the lock. After a quick initial inspection, the brothers were relieved to find no Hâjji agents hiding in the closets or under the beds.

"They really did a number on this place," Frank muttered. He and Joe were standing in their bedroom. Clothes were strewn everywhere, the linings of their suitcases had been slashed, and a dozen long-stemmed red roses lay crushed on the floor next to a broken vase.

Joe walked over to his dresser and opened all of the drawers. "That's strange," he said after a moment. "None of my stuff seems to be missing."

Frank frowned, then started going through his dresser. "None of my stuff is missing, either," he said, sounding puzzled. "I even hid an envelope full of money in one of my sweaters, and it's still there."

After a few more minutes Frank and Joe rejoined Nancy and Bess in the living room. Nancy was on her knees in front of the door, studying it closely.

"All clear," Frank told her and Bess. "There's no one here but us." He added, "Did you figure out how they got in?"

Nancy stood up. "There are fine scratches around the lock. It was definitely picked."

Joe told her and Bess about the state of the bedrooms, adding that none of his or Frank's stuff seemed to be missing. "You two should check your own room, though."

A thorough search by Nancy and Bess revealed that none of their belongings had been stolen.

"I don't get it," Bess said as she rejoined the others in the living room of their suite. "Why would the Hâjji break in and not take anything?"

"Maybe they're just trying to scare us," Nancy suggested. "Or maybe they were looking for some sort of information about us." She frowned. "Hey, do you suppose they figured out that our rooms aren't coed?"

"That would definitely be a problem." Bess sat down on the couch, then added, "I think we should call the police."

"Too risky," Nancy said immediately, sitting down next to her. "We don't want to blow our cover."

"Nancy's right," Frank said. "I think we should—"

Just then there was a soft knock on the door. Nancy, Joe, Bess, and Frank froze. "They're back," Bess whispered frantically.

Joe decided that he wasn't going to let the Hâjji push them around anymore. He bent

down and picked up a table lamp that lay on the floor, then moved toward the door. The lamp would make a good weapon, if necessary.

"Joe!" Frank whispered fiercely at him. "Joe, *no*."

There was another knock; then the knob turned slowly. Joe gripped the lamp more firmly and stood by the door.

"Hello?" A short dark-haired woman peeked in. She was carrying an armful of white towels. "Hello—anyone is there, please?"

Joe realized that it was the maid. Then it occurred to him that they had to get rid of her before she saw the state of the room. Otherwise she would insist that they call the police, and their cover would be blown.

Thinking quickly, Joe called out from behind the door, "Um, can you please come back later? I'm not dressed right now." To back up his statement, he put down the table lamp and started to unbutton his shirt.

"What?" the maid said loudly. She didn't appear to understand him. It was too late—the maid stepped into the room, and the next thing Joe knew she was looking around wildly at the mess and speaking in angry-sounding Arabic.

Frank went up to her, an apologetic smile on his face. "My wife lost her diamond ring," he



said, pointing at his own wedding band. "You know, *ring*. We've been looking for it for the last hour, and we made quite a mess, but we'll clean it all up."

Nancy smiled and nodded at the maid, and at the same time slipped her left hand into the pocket of her dress.

The maid was obviously confused. Frank repeated his story to her more slowly, and finally she nodded. "I understand. You will please clean after you find this ring, yes?"

"Of course," Frank said cheerfully. "Don't worry about a thing."

The maid seemed doubtful as she handed him the towels she'd been holding.

"That was close," Joe said after she left and he was rebuttoning his shirt. "Now what?"

Frank headed for the phone. "Now I'm calling Kimball at the State Department."

"But Kimball said—" Bess began.

"I know what Kimball said," Frank interrupted tensely. "But the Hâjji broke into our rooms, and as far as I can tell, Kimball's agents didn't show up. Plus, after seeing our sleeping arrangements, the Hâjji may be onto us. We've had a major security breach, and Kimball needs to know about it right away."

"State Department. May I help you?"

Frank sat down on the red silk couch and

tucked the phone under his chin. "Yes, I'd like to speak to Jonathan Kimball, please."

While Frank waited to be connected to Kimball, he glanced around. Joe, Nancy, and Bess were cleaning up the mess and searching for any clues the Hâjji might have left behind.

Speaking of things they might have left behind, Frank was glad that before they left to go sight-seeing, he'd checked the phones and rooms for bugging devices. He particularly didn't want the Hâjji to overhear this telephone conversation, or all would be lost.

The voice of the State Department receptionist cut into his thoughts. "I'm sorry, there's no Jonathan Kimball here," he said.

Frank sat up slightly. "There's got to be a mistake. Please check again." Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Nancy's quizzical expression.

"I double-checked, sir. There's no one here by that name" was the reply.

Frank frowned. This had to be a mix-up. "He's in charge of a project involving a terrorist organization known as the Hâjji," he explained.

"Please hold." A few minutes later the receptionist came back on the line. "I'm sorry, sir. There's no known terrorist organization by that name." The receptionist was starting to sound impatient and suspicious, as though

he thought Frank was playing some sort of practical joke.

Frank didn't know what to make of this. All he could come up with was that the receptionist couldn't talk about Kimball or the Hâjji for security reasons. "Thank you for checking," he said finally, and hung up.

"What's going on, Frank?" Joe asked. He was picking up the shards of a broken vase.

Frank relayed the conversation. "I'm not sure what's going on," he finished. "I'm going to call the Addisons. Maybe they'll be able to clue us in."

"But I thought Cole and Cooper were honeymooning with Rebecca and Nikki in some top-secret place," Bess said, puzzled.

"I'll call their parents," Frank said. "Let's see, Charles Addison's bank is based in New York, and it's still the middle of the day there. So let's try there first."

After speaking to the international operator, then getting through to Directory Assistance in Manhattan, Frank finally reached Charles Addison's secretary at the main branch of the Addison Bank. She told him that Mr. Addison was not in the office that day.

"Can I reach him in his Manhattan apartment, then?" Frank asked her. He was guessing that a man like Addison would have a

place in town as well as a home outside the city.

"He's in Greenwich today," the secretary said. "Would you like to leave a message?"

Bingo! Frank thought. He knew that Greenwich was in Connecticut, not all that far from New York City. He wanted to ask her for the number there, but knew she'd never give it to him. "No, no message. Thank you very much."

Fortunately the Addisons' number was listed with Directory Assistance. After a few rings, a deep male voice answered.

"I'd like to speak to Charles Addison, please," Frank said.

"He's not here right now," the voice replied. "This is his son Cole. May I help you?"

Frank was taken aback. "But . . . I thought you were on your honeymoon," he said slowly.

"My—my what?" Cole sounded incredulous. "Who is this?"

"This is Frank Hardy," Frank told him. "You know, Jonathan Kimball hired my brother and me to impersonate you and Cooper in Cairo."

There was a brief silence, "I don't know who you are, but if this is your idea of a prank call—" Cole said angrily.

"Absolutely not," Frank replied quickly. What on earth was going on? he wondered.

Hadn't Kimball given the Addisons the details of his plan to protect them from the Hâjji? And what was Cole doing at home, when he was supposed to be on his honeymoon?

Frank quickly filled Cole in. After he finished, Cole said, "Listen, Hank—"

"Frank."

"Frank. First of all, I don't know any Jonathan Kimball—or anyone else at the State Department, for that matter. Second, neither Cooper nor I got married recently, and we don't know any Rebeccas or Nikkis. And third, we didn't spend our childhood in Cairo. We've lived in the New York area all our lives."

Frank had a sudden sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach. "You're kidding, right?" he finally managed to say.

"No, I'm not kidding," Cole replied huffily. "But it sounds as if this Kimball person was." He added, "Unless you have any more questions, I have a million things to do—"

"Um, sure," Frank said. "I'm sorry about the mix-up."

When he'd hung up, he turned to Joe, Nancy, and Bess, who were all staring at him.

"What's going on, Frank?" Joe asked.

Frank's dark eyes glittered angrily. "I think we've been set up."

\* \* \*

The Café Isis was a crowded, lively restaurant in the heart of the Old Cairo district. Its decor consisted of mismatched tables and chairs, faded travel posters, and vases of plastic flowers. In the corner, two elderly men were playing backgammon.

Nancy snapped her menu shut. It was entirely in Arabic, and she hadn't been able to make any sense of it. "I guess I'll just order what those people are having," she said, pointing to the next table.

"I think I'll do the same," Frank said. Bess and Joe nodded.

After the waiter had taken their orders and brought them glasses of cinnamon tea, Nancy turned to Frank. "So do you have any theories?"

"About why Kimball set us up, you mean?" Frank shook his head. "I can't figure it out. I mean, he went to a lot of trouble to get us over here—"

"And he spent a lot of money, too," Bess added, taking a sip of her tea. "I mean, with the plane tickets and spending money and clothes and wedding rings, he must have shelled out over twenty grand."

"Did you check Kimball out at all?" Nancy asked Frank and Joe. "He must have shown you his State Department ID, right?"

Joe nodded. "He did that first thing, when

he came to our house. It looked legit. He also mentioned a couple of private investigators he'd worked with in the past. One of them was a guy we knew—Patrick Martin—and Frank said he'd call him, to ask about Kimball." He glanced at Frank. "What did Patrick have to say?"

"I never reached him," Frank replied. "His secretary told me he was out of the country on business."

Just then their waiter appeared and set down four plates of steaming food. "Yum," Bess said, admiring hers. "What is this, anyway?"

"Grilled pigeon," the waiter replied pleasantly. "Also cucumbers with yogurt, and fava beans with cumin. Please enjoy."

After he'd disappeared, Bess made a face. "Grilled pigeon?"

"It's, like, the national dish of Egypt," Frank told her. "I read about it in one of our guidebooks. It's supposed to be great." He grinned. "Just pretend it's chicken or something."

Nancy decided to try the side dishes first. As she ate, she found herself staring out the window of the restaurant and thinking about the case. Why had Kimball tricked them into coming to Cairo? she wondered. Was the break-in at the hotel a part of his scheme, or

*Secrets of the Nile*

was it unrelated? Did he know they were onto him? Would they ever see him again?

Then a shocking sight jolted her out of her thoughts. Across the street, from the café, under a bright streetlamp, stood two men engaged in a serious conversation. They looked just like Kimball and the burly-bearded man from the airport!



# Chapter

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## Five

**N**ANCY COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. What was Kimball doing here—and with the bearded guy?

"Look!" Nancy exclaimed to her friends, pointing out the window. "Am I imagining things, or is that—"

"That is," Frank cut in. He stood up, pulled out his wallet, and threw a hundred-pound note on the table. "I don't know about the rest of you, but I have a few questions I'd like to ask our Mr. Kimball and his friend." Then he turned and started for the door.

Nancy followed him, maneuvering carefully through the narrow spaces between the tables. Behind her she heard Bess mutter to Joe:

"Well, at least we don't have to eat that grilled pigeon now."

Once outside, Nancy was relieved to find that Kimball and the bearded guy were still there, talking in hushed tones under the streetlamp. Unlike the day before, when he'd been playing baggage carrier at JFK, Kimball was now dressed in an elegant beige suit, white shirt, and print tie.

The narrow street was jammed with pedestrians, musicians, and vendors pushing carts. An old man was squatting on the ground pounding out a brass jar, and near him, a merchant was haggling loudly with a tourist over the price of a rug. The mood was at once festive and totally chaotic.

"It's pretty wild out here," Nancy whispered to Frank. "I think we can get over there without Kimball seeing us."

Frank nodded—but just then Kimball happened to glance in their direction. His eyes widened in shock. Then he said something to the bearded man, and the two of them took off down the street.

"Come on, guys!" Frank yelled over his shoulder. "We can't let them get away."

While running after the two men, Nancy soon discovered that Old Cairo was an impossible maze. Streets wound and twisted every which way before branching off into tiny dimly

lit alleys. The narrow passageways were made even narrower by the stalls of fruit, leather goods, and spiced meat that were crammed into every available inch of space.

To add to the confusion, many tourists and locals happened to be out strolling that night, so Nancy found that trailing Kimball and the bearded man was no easy task. They kept disappearing into the crowd, then reappearing, only to turn down one alley or the other.

Nancy was following Frank and Joe into one of those alleys when she heard a loud crash and then a scream behind her.

She stopped and whirled around. Bess was lying on the ground next to an overturned cart. All around her hundreds of oranges were rolling this way and that. An elderly Egyptian woman was standing over her, shaking a finger at her and yelling angrily in Arabic. A crowd of people had stopped to stare.

"Are you okay?" Nancy called out to Bess. She glanced over her shoulder and saw that Frank and Joe were continuing after Kimball and the bearded guy. She wished she could go with them, but she couldn't leave Bess alone.

Bess sat up. "I'm okay," she replied shakily. "But my dress isn't." She grimaced at her white linen dress, which was covered with dirt.

The elderly woman was continuing to yell at

Bess. Stepping forward, Nancy said, "I'm sorry, we don't speak Arabic. Do you speak English?"

"Yes, a little," the woman replied, studying Nancy suspiciously. "This girl ran into my cart. What is she going to do about this? These oranges are very expensive. *Wa'if!*" she shouted to a young boy who was about to steal one.

Nancy looked around. "The oranges don't look as if they've been damaged," she observed. "My friend and I will pick them up for you and put them back in your cart, okay?"

It took them nearly fifteen minutes to stack the oranges back into the cart. By then Frank and Joe were long gone, and Nancy had no idea where they were. She only hoped they'd caught up to Kimball and the other man.

Nancy gave the elderly woman a twenty-pound note for her inconvenience. Then she and Bess started down the street.

"Where to now?" Bess asked. Before Nancy could answer, Bess said, "Maybe we should just head back to the hotel. There's no way we're going to find Frank and Joe, and I can't walk around Cairo looking like *this*." She pointed dramatically to her dirt-covered dress.

"I don't know," Nancy said, glancing around. "I'm not sure where we are."

Then she noticed something strange. Two blond guys were walking a short distance behind them. She remembered that they'd been part of the crowd around the overturned orange cart.

Were they following her and Bess, or did they just happen to be strolling in the same direction? Nancy wondered.

Just to be sure, she grabbed Bess's arm and steered her into an alley. "This way," she whispered. "Don't look now, but I think we're being tailed by two men."

Bess blanched. "Huh? You mean Kimball and the bearded man?"

Nancy shook her head. "Two new ones. But I want to make sure first."

After they'd walked partway down the alley, Nancy stopped at a stall and pretended to study a display of amulets and scarabs. When she glanced over her shoulder, she saw that the two blonds were at the next stall.

Nancy frowned. Who were they? Did they work for Kimball? If so, were she and Bess in danger?

"Come on, Bess," Nancy said, and continued down the alley.

Nancy increased her pace, and Bess did, too. Behind her, Nancy could hear two pairs of footsteps quickening. The alley was getting darker and more deserted; she hadn't seen a

stall in a while. She hoped it would turn off on to a busier street soon. She really didn't like the idea of being alone with the two strangers.

Then Nancy turned a corner and realized with alarm that the alley dead-ended at a stone wall.

"Now what do we do?" Bess asked nervously.

Just then Nancy felt a strong hand on her arm. She spun around. It was one of the blond guys, the taller one. When Bess saw what was going on, she screamed and backed up against the stone wall.

Her heart racing and her instincts on full alert, Nancy went into a martial arts stance. Knees slightly bent, she flung her arm in the air, throwing the man's hand off. He stared at her in surprise. Then she jumped forward and delivered a swift kick to his stomach.

"Ow!" he grunted, and collapsed to the ground.

The other guy stepped back a few feet and raised his hands in the air. "W-we aren't muggers or anything," he said quickly to Nancy. "W-we just wanted to know if you'd like to go out dancing with us."

Nancy gaped at him. "You wanted to go dancing with us?" she repeated.

The man on the ground nodded. "Yeah. We're Americans, and you looked like Ameri-

cans, and I thought we might have a good time together." He clutched his stomach and frowned at Nancy. "But if you're going to try any more moves like that, I'm not sure I want to go dancing with you."

Nancy glanced at Bess, and the two of them burst out laughing.

Frank stood in the middle of a crowded street, frowning. He'd lost Kimball and the bearded man; he'd also lost Nancy and Bess. Where was everyone?

"Look!" Joe cried out suddenly. "Over there."

Frank turned around. His brother was pointing to an ornate stone building with a minaret rising into the starry night sky.

"I saw someone who looked like Kimball going in there," Joe explained. "Come on, let's check it out."

Frank and Joe ran up to the door, which was heavy and inlaid with gold and silver. But before they could enter, they were stopped by a middle-aged man dressed in a white galabia robe.

"You cannot go in," he told them in a gruff voice.

"But we're looking for someone—" Joe began.

The man shook his head. "This is a mosque.

If you want to visit, you must pay an entrance fee and purchase these to wear over your shoes." He pointed to a rack of white cloth slippers on the wall behind him. "It is our tradition."

Frank dug into his wallet and handed the attendant some money. Then he and Joe put the slippers on over their shoes.

When they got inside, they found themselves in a cavernous space divided by arches and tall columns. Worshipers were kneeling on red and gold Oriental rugs, their heads bent to the floor in prayer. The air was warm and fragrant with the sweet, heavy smell of incense.

"Where do you suppose they went?" Joe whispered to Frank.

Frank glanced around. Unless Kimball and the bearded guy were on the floor pretending to pray, there really wasn't anywhere for them to hide.

Then, out of the corner of his eye, Frank saw a door close at the far end of the mosque. "This way," he whispered to Joe as he started walking briskly toward the door. As much as he wanted to run, he didn't want to disturb those who were praying.

When they got to the door, Frank opened it quickly. It led into an alleyway. He glanced to the right and the left and spotted Kimball and



the bearded man strolling casually toward a busy main street. They think they've lost us, Frank thought.

Frank pointed them out to Joe. "Let's try to sneak up on them, okay?" he said in a low voice. "It's the only chance we've got."

They took off their white slippers and started down the alley. After a few minutes Frank found himself a few feet behind Kimball, who'd stopped at the intersection of the alleyway and the busy street to light a cigarette.

Frank reached out and grabbed his wrist, hard. "Hey, Kimball," he said loudly. "I think it's time we had a little talk."

Kimball whirled around and wrenched his wrist away from Frank in a swift motion, then took off running. "Mahfouz!" he shouted to the bearded man. "Mahfouz, come on!"

Mahfouz, who'd been walking slightly ahead of Kimball, turned around and took in what was happening. Then he and Kimball started sprinting toward a crowded square at the end of the street.

Frank and Joe ran after them. "Come on, we've almost got them," Joe yelled to Frank.

Kimball and Mahfouz proved to be faster runners than the Hardys, and by the time the brothers got to the square, they'd lost the two men altogether.

Joe stopped in his tracks and leaned against a palm tree, panting. "Great," he muttered. "After all this, we end up with zip. No Kimball, no Mahfouz, no nothing."

Frank stopped beside him. "That's where you're wrong," he said breathlessly. Reaching into his pocket, he pulled out a cuff link. It was gold and had a strange-looking hieroglyph inscribed on it.

"What is it?" Joe asked, puzzled.

"A clue," Frank replied. "I ripped it out of Kimball's cuff when I grabbed his wrist."

When Frank and Joe got back to their suite at the Grand Hotel Misr, they were relieved to find Nancy there. "What happened to you two, anyway?" Frank asked her, his brown eyes expressing his concern.

Nancy, who was sitting on the floor going through the ripped lining of her suitcase, stopped and pushed a lock of hair back from her forehead. "Nothing too interesting. Basically, we got lost." Then she added, "But what about you? Did you get Kimball and the other guy?"

"Nope," Joe said, sitting down on the couch. "Where's Bess? Is she okay?"

"She's asleep," Nancy explained. "She was totally wiped out. Listen, I found something while I was looking through all this stuff."

A Nancy Drew & Hardy Boys SuperMystery

"We found something, too," Frank said, fingering the cuff link in his pocket. "But you go first." He sat down on the floor next to Nancy.

Nancy held up a slender piece of copper wire. "I came across this in the lining of my suitcase. Or what's left of it, anyway."

Joe shrugged. "It's just a piece of wire. So?"

"So I see what Nancy's getting at," Frank said slowly. "You know what they use copper wires for sometimes? Bombs."

"Oh," Joe said. Then his blue eyes widened. "Oh." He turned to Nancy. "So what you're saying—"

"I'm saying that Kimball, or whoever he is, might have used us to smuggle the components of a bomb into Cairo," Nancy said grimly.

# Chapter

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## Six

**F**RANK WAS SILENT for a moment as he considered this. Could it be possible?

"It fits, doesn't it?" he said finally, folding his hands under his chin. "Kimball set it up so that he had to give us a bunch of suitcases. He could have hidden bomb components in them. And the break-in earlier tonight—that could have been him or Mahfouz coming to get the components." Frank explained to Nancy that they'd heard Kimball call the bearded guy Mahfouz.

"But why go to all that trouble?" Joe asked. "I mean, I can see why Kimball wouldn't have wanted to smuggle the bomb over himself, but

why didn't he just hire someone he knew and trusted to do it?"

Nancy shook her head. "No, that would have been way too risky. The person could have gotten caught and left a trail to Kimball." She paused, then said, "His plan was brilliant, really. He pretended to hire us to work on an assignment, and he gave us the suitcases. Since we didn't know the suitcases were loaded with explosives, we were the perfect couriers—we never acted nervous or guilty. And," she added, "if we'd gotten caught by the airport officials, we couldn't have fingered Kimball, since we don't know who he really is. I'm sure the name Jonathan Kimball is an alias."

"And I'm sure you're right," Frank said. He stood up and began pacing around the room. He couldn't believe he'd allowed himself to be used by Kimball. Why hadn't he been more careful about checking out the guy's credentials? he chided himself. Now Kimball could be on the loose in Egypt with a bomb, and he—Frank Hardy—had assisted him.

Frank stopped in his tracks and fixed his gaze on Joe and Nancy. "We've got to catch him," he said, his voice hard with determination, "but we can't go to the authorities with this stuff. All we have is a theory and a piece of copper wire. Besides, we're here with phony passports and visas, and if the police don't

believe our story they'll kick us out of the country—or maybe even throw us in jail.”

“Personally, I wouldn't mind the getting-kicked-out part,” Joe muttered. “I've had enough of Egypt to last me awhile, and besides, Thanksgiving is coming up. You know—turkey, Aunt Gertrude's pumpkin pie, football games—”

“No way,” Frank said firmly. “Kimball used us big-time, and we can't let him get away with it. Right now he's out there somewhere with a bomb, and he may be planning to detonate it soon. We have to stop him before he hurts a lot of people.”

Nancy and Joe glanced at each other. “Count me in,” she said to Frank.

Frank smiled at her, and she smiled back. He was really glad she'd decided to stay, for more reasons than he cared to admit.

Joe cleared his throat. “Um, hello? If anyone cares, I guess I'll stick around, too. You're right, Frank—we've got to get our hands on that slimeball before he does any more damage.” He grinned and added, “I guess we'll just have to eat grilled pigeon for Thanksgiving this year.”

Bess glanced around the crowded hotel restaurant, then gave Nancy a quizzical look. “Okay, let me get this straight. Kimball used

us to smuggle a bomb into Egypt for him, and now we're going to stick around to try to find him. But in the meantime we can't go to the police because they probably wouldn't believe us. And we have to keep pretending we're two married couples because if the authorities find out we've been traveling with false passports, they'll probably throw us in jail."

"Right." Nancy took a sip of her coffee, which was much thicker and sweeter than she was used to. "Ziyada," the waiter had called it.

Bess made a face. "Great. First it's terrorists, now it's a guy with a bomb. This isn't exactly my dream vacation, Nan—I mean, Rebecca. All I can say is, our *husbands* had better—" Then she stopped. "Hey, where are Frank and Joe, anyway? They're going to miss breakfast."

"They're asking the desk clerk about Kimball's cuff link," Nancy explained, dabbing her lips with a linen napkin. "It's got this weird hieroglyph on it, and they're hoping the clerk can tell them what it means."

Nancy and Bess spent the next few minutes in silence, concentrating on their breakfast: almond-filled pastries and fresh fruit. As Nancy ate, she thought about Kimball. If he really had smuggled a bomb into Cairo, when and where did he plan to detonate it? she

wondered. For all she knew, hundreds of lives could be in danger.

Then her thoughts drifted to Frank. She felt ambivalent about going on with the married-couple charade. On the one hand, she realized it was the practical thing to do; after all, they couldn't risk getting caught with phony IDs. But on the other hand, pretending to be Frank's wife, being so close to him, was making her feel very mixed up. She was enjoying it way too much; every time he hugged her or held her hand, fireworks went off around her. But deep down, she also knew that their relationship could never go anywhere. She had Ned, and—

Nancy's thoughts were interrupted by a startling sound: someone was crying. It was coming from the table behind her.

She turned around. A tall, heavyset woman with long honey-blond hair was bent over her table, weeping softly.

Nancy glanced at Bess, who was staring at the woman, too. Bess shrugged and mouthed the words "What should we do?"

Nancy shrugged back, then tapped the woman on the shoulder. "Excuse me," she said gently. "Are you okay?"

The woman looked up. Her freckled face was stained with tears, and her green eyes were



bloodshot. "Oh—oh, I'm so sorry," she murmured. "I didn't mean to disturb you. It's just that I—" Then her voice broke, and she started crying again.

"Is there anything we can do?" Nancy asked her sympathetically.

The woman picked up her napkin and wiped her eyes. "It's my daughter," she said brokenly. "She's—she's missing."

Bess gasped. "Have you told the police? How old is she? How long has she been missing?"

"It's not what you think," the woman said, shaking her head. "You see, my ex-husband, Darius, kidnapped her about a month ago during a visitation weekend. I think he brought her to Egypt, since he has friends and family here. I've been trying to track them down." Fresh tears welled up in her eyes. "Leila's only four. She's just a baby."

"That's awful," Nancy said. "Can't the authorities help you?"

"They're of no use whatsoever," the woman said bitterly. "The U.S. authorities have very little power over here, and the Egyptian authorities tend to look the other way because Darius is Egyptian and I'm American. Plus, the laws are different here." Then she blushed slightly. "Oh, where are my manners? I'm

Susannah Porter-Rashad. Although after this, I'm definitely going to drop the Rashad part."

Nancy and Bess introduced themselves as Rebecca and Nikki Addison. "So what are your plans?" Nancy asked Susannah. "Do you have any leads?"

"I'm going to try to find Darius's brother, Hanif," Susannah explained. "He's a student at the university. Plus, I want to talk to Bishara Yasseen, Darius's ex-girlfriend. She's a TV reporter for Channel Fourteen." She added, "Either one of them could be hiding Darius and Leila, or at least know where they might be."

Nancy felt really sorry for Susannah and wanted to help her, but she also knew that Frank and Joe might need her and Bess to track down Kimball and Mahfouz.

"Listen, Susannah," Nancy said after a moment. "Maybe Nikki and I could come along with you—you know, give you some backup. We've, um, done some detective work back in the States, and we're used to this sort of thing." She glanced at Bess, who nodded eagerly.

Susannah smiled gratefully. "Oh, that would be wonderful." Then her smile faded. "But you're on vacation here, right? I wouldn't want to cut into your fun."

"We'd be happy to do it," Nancy said quickly. "The thing is, we'll have to check with our husbands first, to make sure it doesn't interfere with anything they might have planned." She glanced around and frowned. "If they ever get here, that is."

Joe drummed his fingers impatiently on the counter. "When is this clerk going to get off the phone?" he muttered to Frank. "We could have had a whole book of hieroglyphs translated by now."

"I'm sure it'll be soon," Frank reassured him.

Joe picked up a glossy magazine and began leafing through it. Inside were pictures of an Egyptian resort on the Mediterranean: miles of golden sand and throngs of beautiful bikini-clad women. Joe's mood began to lift a little.

"Have you ever been there?" a low, breathy voice asked.

Joe glanced up. Standing next to him was the most gorgeous woman he'd ever seen. Tall and slender, she had deep blue eyes and a cascade of raven curls sweeping down her back. She was wearing a black leather skirt, black boots, and a purple silk shirt.

"Um, no, I've never been there," Joe replied when he'd finally recovered his ability to speak. "Have you?"

The woman, who appeared to be in her early twenties, rolled her eyes and nodded. "Going there was a mistake," she said. Her English was laced with a heavy French accent. "It is what you Americans call a tourist trap. I really prefer the Greek islands myself. Don't you?"

"Sure," Joe said. "By the way, I'm Cooper Addison."

"Dominique Moreau," the woman said with a friendly smile. "Are you free for breakfast? Maybe we could dine together."

"That sounds great—"

Just then Joe felt a sharp jab in his side. He turned around. Frank was glaring at him.

Dominique glanced at Frank, then at Joe. "Oh, are you two together?"

"This is my brother, Cole," Joe explained. "We're here on, um, vacation."

Frank grinned at Dominique. "Actually, we're here on our honeymoon with our wives, Rebecca and Nikki. You did tell Dominique about Nikki, didn't you, Coop?"

Joe felt like killing Frank, but he contained himself. "Actually, I was just about to."

Dominique nodded. "How nice for you both. Cairo is a wonderful place for the *voyage de nocces*—the honeymoon."

"Dominique?"

Joe looked up and saw a middle-aged woman walking toward them. Slim and tanned,

with a silvery gray pageboy, she was dressed in a khaki pantsuit, with a bright orange scarf knotted casually around her neck.

"Dominique dear, the restaurant is going to stop serving breakfast in fifteen minutes," the woman said in unaccented English. "We should hurry. Besides, I want to get to the Antiquities Museum before the crowds become too unbearable."

Dominique turned to the Hardys. "This is Isabelle Moreau, my aunt," she said. "Aunt Isabelle, this is Cole and Cooper Addison. They are from . . ." She raised her eyebrows at Joe.

"We're from New York City," Joe said quickly.

"What a coincidence—so am I," Isabelle said. "You two aren't related to Charles Addison of Addison Bank by any chance, are you?"

"Actually, he's our dad," Joe replied. He was getting a queasy feeling in his stomach. Was Isabelle Moreau a friend of Charles Addison? he wondered nervously.

"Really?" Isabelle said, interested. "Isn't that funny? I know a relative of yours—Charlotte Karol."

Joe felt an icy stab of fear. This wasn't part of the bios Kimball had given him and Frank—if the bios were any good to begin

with, that is. "Charlotte Karol," Joe repeated vaguely.

"We haven't seen Charlotte in a while," Frank told Isabelle. Then he added, "So—are you two on vacation?" Joe realized gratefully that Frank was trying to change the subject.

"I'm a travel writer," Isabelle explained. "I'm doing a piece on Egypt. Dominique flew in from Paris just yesterday to join me. We thought it might be nice to take a trip together."

"How long will you be staying in Cairo?" Dominique asked Joe and Frank.

"We're not sure just yet," Frank replied, glancing at Joe. "For a few days, anyway."

Isabelle put her hand on Dominique's arm. "How about that breakfast, dear?"

Dominique smiled at Frank and Joe. Joe thought his heart was going to melt. "I hope we see you again soon," she said sweetly, as she and Isabelle turned and walked toward the restaurant.

Frank turned to Joe. "That wasn't too swift, trying to hit on Dominique," he said sternly.

"Hit on Dominique?" Joe repeated innocently. "No way. I was just being friendly."

"Yeah, yeah. We'll talk about it lat— Oh, hey, excuse me." The clerk had finally gotten off the phone, and Frank waved at him, trying

to get his attention. "Excuse me, can you help us with something?"

The clerk came up to the counter. "Certainly, sir."

Joe fished the cuff link out of his pocket and showed it to him. "Can you tell us what this hieroglyph means? Is it somebody's name?"

The clerk studied it for a long moment. "This hieroglyph means 'water,'" he said finally. "It is not a name."

Frank and Joe looked at each other in disappointment. Then Joe said, "We found it on the street yesterday, and we're trying to trace its owner. Do you know where it might have come from?"

"There are several jewelers in Cairo who hand-craft cuff links like these," the clerk told him. "I will give you their names. They are all in Old Cairo, in the Khan al-Khalili bazaar."

When the clerk had written the names down on a piece of paper, Frank and Joe thanked him and started toward the restaurant to meet Nancy and Bess. Just then Joe spotted Nancy coming through the lobby toward them.

"I was wondering if you were ever going to make it," she called out. "Bess is still in there—working on seconds."

Frank told her about the lead the clerk had given them. "I'd like to check out this Khan al-Khalili bazaar after breakfast."

"Do you think you guys could manage without us?" Nancy asked. "We just met this woman named Susannah Porter-Rashad. Her ex-husband kidnapped their daughter and brought her over here. She's here to find them, and I thought we might help her out a little."

"No problem," Frank said, and Joe nodded. "Why don't we go our separate ways this morning, then meet back here for lunch—say about one-thirty?"

"Sounds perfect," Nancy said with a grin. "Hey, if we're lucky, we'll have *two* cases solved before we leave Cairo."

Pausing at the intersection of two alleys, Frank studied the map in his hand. "The Khan al-Khalili bazaar should be right here," he murmured to Joe, frowning.

"I don't know how anyone finds his way around this town." Joe took a sip of the coffee he'd bought at a nearby convenience store, and flinched. "Hot."

Frank glanced around. Old Cairo looked much as it had the night before, but in the bright light of day it was even more colorful, with the pale browns and pastels of the tightly packed houses and shops and mosques, the vivid oranges and yellows of the fruit in the stalls, the rainbow hues of the flowers in the vendors' carts.



Joe stepped aside to let an old man and his camel pass, then looked over Frank's shoulder at the map. "Why don't we try that way?" he suggested, pointing to the right.

Frank nodded. "Let's do it."

He and Joe proceeded down the alley, which was very narrow and windy. The buildings seemed to be totally residential; there were no merchants in sight.

Wafting from someone's kitchen were the sweet smells of cinnamon and warm bread. "Mmmm," Joe said, inhaling deeply. "Hey, when is lunch, anyway?"

"Not for a long time," Frank told him. "Anyway, forget lunch—we've got to find the bazaar. Maybe we should ask for directions, huh?"

"I don't see anybody to ask." Joe took another sip of his coffee, then turned around. "Oops, I guess I was wrong. Hey, Frank. *Frank!*" His voice had taken on an urgent tone.

"What?" Frank glanced over his shoulder as he continued to walk—then froze.

Standing behind him and Joe in the narrow alley were Mahfouz and two strange thugs, all three brandishing knives.

# Chapter

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## Seven

**F**RANK TENSED as he stared at the cold steel blades and at the men who were holding them. Mahfouz's black eyes were gleaming brightly, as though he relished the thought of finishing off the Hardys.

"There are three of them and only two of us," Frank whispered to Joe.

"I appreciate the math lesson, but I can count, too," Joe whispered back. "The question is, what are we going to do?"

Frank frantically tried to figure a way out of their dilemma. Then a thought came to him. "You don't want any more of that coffee, do you, Joe?"

"Huh?" Joe acted totally bewildered before his eyes finally lit up with understanding. "I mean, no. Maybe I'll let someone else finish it." With that, he stepped forward and flung the contents of his cup into Mahfouz's face.

Mahfouz screamed as the hot liquid scalded him. His grip on his knife loosened, and it clattered to the ground. Joe was on it in a second. In the meantime Frank rushed Mahfouz, swung his right leg forward, and delivered a powerful kick to the bearded man's midsection. Mahfouz grunted and doubled over in pain.

Then Frank noticed the two thugs coming after Joe. "Look out!" he cried out.

The taller thug, who was in front, leaped forward and made a swift slicing motion with his knife. Joe jumped back, and the knife just missed giving him a nose job. Frank intervened, seizing the thug's knife arm with his left hand and landing a well-aimed punch to the guy's jaw with his right.

The shorter thug took the opportunity to grab Joe from behind and hold a knife to his throat.

"Oh, no, you don't," Joe muttered angrily, and before the thug could react, the younger Hardy grasped the attacker's knife arm, bent forward slightly, and flipped him over his

head. Then he stepped on the guy's wrist and ground his foot down. The thug cried out, and his fingers fluttered open, releasing the knife. Joe promptly picked it up.

The taller man clutched his own knife and looked from Frank to Joe to Mahfouz uncertainly. Mahfouz, who had his hand on his stomach and was panting heavily, called out something to him in Arabic. It sounded to Frank like "*Bolees!*" He thought maybe it was an instruction on their next move.

In response, the shorter thug jumped up from the ground. Joe threw Frank one of his knives, and the two of them positioned themselves for another round.

Instead of attacking, however, the two thugs and Mahfouz suddenly took off running down the alley.

Joe glanced in confusion at Frank. "Did I miss something here? I mean, I know I'm an awesome fighter, but still . . ."

"Let's follow them," Frank said quickly. "Mahfouz might lead us to Kimball."

"*Wa'if!* Stop!"

Frank and Joe spun around at the sound of the strange voices. Two men dressed in black uniforms were coming toward them from the other direction—police officers.

Just then Frank realized that he and Joe

were holding knives. He snapped his blade shut and started to slip it into his pocket, but one of the officers stepped forward and barked out an order in Arabic.

"I'm sorry," Frank said. "I don't speak Arabic."

"Drop the knife!" the man said, in heavily accented English. "You, too," he added, pointing at Joe.

"But you don't understand," Joe said feebly. "These aren't our knives—"

"Drop them—*now*," the second officer ordered. "We are placing you under arrest."

"This is kind of a creepy area," Bess remarked.

Nancy glanced around. It *was* creepy. The neighborhood was on the outskirts of Cairo and consisted mostly of run-down apartment buildings and boarded-up storefronts. The streets were deserted except for an occasional stray cat or dog rooting through the garbage.

"Darius's brother doesn't have much money," Susannah said by way of explanation as she stepped over a broken bottle on the sidewalk. "Darius offered to help put him through college, but Hanif refused. He's very proud."

"When did Darius come to America?" Nancy asked her.

"About ten years ago, right after he graduated from college," Susannah explained. "Since then he's worked for the Aquarius Group in New York City. I work there, too. That's how we met."

"The Aquarius Group?" Bess repeated. "What do you do there—astrology?"

Susannah laughed. "No, nothing like that. It's an engineering firm that specializes in underground water exploration. It's a really interesting company." She added, "John, the man who runs it, was wonderful about my wanting to come here to look for Leila. He gave me an indefinite leave of absence, with full pay and benefits and everything."

Then she stopped. "I think this is it," she said, pointing to a three-story stucco building just up ahead. "Yes—number twenty-four Zaghoul Street."

They found the front door locked. Susannah rang the buzzer and waited. After a moment an elderly woman with white hair peeked out of one of the upstairs windows. She called out something in Arabic.

Susannah responded in Arabic, and a second later the woman nodded and said, "Ah, you are Americans." Her English was very stilted.

"Yes," Susannah replied. "We're looking for Hanif Rashad. I'm Susannah Porter-Rashad."

The old woman's face lit up. "Oh, you are Hanif's relative. Wait please. I come down."

Nancy heard the loud clatter of footsteps on stairs, and a second later the old woman opened the front door. "You are Hanif's American cousin," she said, beaming at Susannah. Nancy noticed that two of her front teeth were filled with gold.

"Actually, his brother, Darius, is my—" Susannah began.

"Husband," the old woman finished, nodding. "Aywa, I remember now. Hanif is not here, he is at his classes, but I let you into his room and you wait for him." She clucked her tongue. "It is not safe for you to be standing out there, you nice young womens."

Susannah glanced at Bess and Nancy and shrugged. Then the three of them followed the old woman inside. As they went up the creaky stairs, Nancy noticed that the paint on the walls was peeling badly, and that the place smelled of mold and dust.

At the top of the stairs, the old woman pulled a key out of her apron pocket and opened a door. "This is Hanif's room," she announced with another toothy grin. "You wait for him here. I go finish making my stew now."

Susannah thanked her, and she, Nancy, and

Bess went in. The room was about twenty feet by twenty feet. It was sparsely furnished with a cot with rumpled sheets, an old wooden desk, a couple of chairs, and a shelf filled with books. Clothes were strewn all over the floor and on the chairs, mostly jeans and T-shirts. Cobwebs hung from the ceiling. In one corner they saw a greasy hot plate and a tiny refrigerator, and beyond the main room Nancy could see a small cluttered bathroom.

"Wow," Bess said, awestruck. "And I thought *I* was bad about keeping my room clean."

Susannah sat down on the cot. "I feel kind of guilty deceiving that woman," she said with a troubled frown. "I mean, she thinks Hanif is still my brother-in-law."

"That's okay," Nancy said quickly. "It got us into this room, didn't it? It'll give us a chance to do a little, um, looking around."

"Looking around for what?" Susannah asked her, puzzled.

"Something that might tell us where Darius and Leila are," Nancy explained. She walked over to Hanif's bookshelf and picked up a framed photograph that was balanced precariously on a pile of magazines. In the photo was a handsome man with wavy dark hair, golden brown skin, and serious brown eyes. Next to



him was a smiling little girl with long brown hair and green eyes. She was wearing a blue and orange New York Mets cap.

Nancy showed the photo to Leila. "Is this Darius and Leila?"

Susannah swallowed. "Y-yes," she said shakily. "I took that about a year ago, before Darius and I separated."

"Your daughter's beautiful," Bess said, studying the photo over Susannah's shoulder.

Nancy left Susannah and Bess chatting about Leila and walked over to Hanif's desk, which was piled high with papers, books, dirty coffee mugs, and banana peels. "Yuck," Nancy muttered as she tried to wade through the mess in search of a clue. "I'd better find something in here."

All the writing on the papers was in Arabic, which didn't help Nancy at all. Then she came across something interesting underneath the pile: a desk calendar.

It, too, was in Arabic. She carried it over to the cot and sat down between Susannah and Bess. "Do you read Arabic?"

"Oh, yeah, right," Bess replied, rolling her eyes. "The only Arabic words I know are 'aday?' and 'ana gu'ana'—'how much is that?' and 'I'm hungry.'"

Nancy grinned. "Uh, Bess? I was talking to Susannah."

"My Arabic is fair," Susannah told Nancy. She glanced at the desk calendar uncertainly. "You—you want me to snoop through this?"

"We need to do whatever we can to find Darius and Leila. Even if Hanif knows something about them, he may not volunteer the information." Nancy handed Susannah the desk calendar. "For starters, why don't you see if there's anything written in it for today?"

Susannah flipped through the pages. "Here we go," she said after a moment. "Let's see, there's something scribbled in the margin: 'Hotel Nasser.' No, it's 'Hotel Nadr.' Then here at the bottom of the page it says, 'Call Professor Ragab about English literature exam.'"

"Hotel Nadr," Nancy repeated. "Hmm. How about the rest of this week? Anything?"

Susannah shook her head. "It's all stuff having to do with school. I guess he doesn't get out much."

"How about—" Nancy began, but just then something caught her eye. The door to Hanif's room was being opened slowly.

Then suddenly the barrel of a gun appeared through the crack—pointed at Nancy and her friends!

# Chapter

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# Eight

NANCY'S HEART WAS HAMMERING in her chest as she glanced frantically around the room in search of a place to hide. It was too late, though. The assailant kicked the door open and rushed into the room, his gun still leveled at the three young women.

He shouted something in Arabic, then stopped in his tracks. He lowered his gun. "Susannah?" he murmured incredulously. "What are you doing here?" His English was excellent.

Studying the man closely, Nancy realized that it was Hanif. She could see a strong resemblance between him and his older brother; Hanif had Darius's handsome fea-

tures, serious brown eyes, and dark wavy hair, which he wore slightly long. He was dressed in jeans and a wrinkled white T-shirt.

"Y-your landlady let us in," Susannah said shakily. She pointed at the gun with a trembling finger. "Wh-what are you doing with that?"

"I was mugged a few months ago," Hanif explained. "I always carry this with me now, wherever I go." He waved the gun at the window. "When I was walking up to the building I saw movement in here. I got suspicious."

He put the gun down on his desk, then glared at Nancy and Bess. "And who are *you*?"

"These are my friends Rebecca and Nikki Addison," Susannah said quickly. "Rebecca and Nikki, this is Darius's brother, Hanif Rashad." Nancy smiled at Hanif, but he didn't smile back.

Hanif sat down on the edge of his desk. "Okay, Susannah," he said, his expression totally humorless. "I am sure this is not a social call. What are you three doing here?"

"I think you probably know, Hanif," Susannah said slowly. "I'm looking for Leila and Darius."

"You are looking for—" Hanif stopped and frowned. "I do not get it. Darius is in New

York, right? And Leila should be with you, right?"

"Darius kidnapped Leila a month ago during a visitation weekend," Susannah told him grimly. "I haven't seen them or heard from them since."

Nancy glanced at Hanif to see how he would react to this. Outwardly he seemed surprised; his mouth dropped open, and he shook his head as if in disbelief. Then the expression was gone so quickly that she thought she might have imagined it.

"That does not sound like Darius," Hanif said after a moment. "Are you sure that is how it happened?"

"I'm sure," Susannah replied. Then she leaned forward and stared at Hanif imploringly. "The question is, do you know where they are? Have you heard from them? I know your loyalty lies with your brother, Hanif, but please—I have to know if my baby is okay. I have to find her."

Hanif was silent. "No," he said finally. "I do not know where they are, and I have not heard from them." Then he stood up. "Now, if that is all, I really must ask you to leave. I have a lot of studying to do."

"But you've got to help us," Bess pleaded. "We're talking about your niece here—"

Just then Hanif spotted his desk calendar

lying on Nancy's lap. "What are you doing with that?" he barked out.

Susannah paled. "Um, we were—"

"We were trying to see what your schedule was today, so we wouldn't wait around here any longer than necessary," Nancy cut in. "I hope that was okay."

"No, it was *not* okay," Hanif replied huffily. "I do not appreciate people going through my private things. Now, please, all of you—*go*."

Susannah reached into her purse, pulled out a piece of paper, and scribbled something on it. "This is where I'm staying," she said, handing the paper to Hanif. "If you hear anything at all, please call me anytime day or night."

Hanif took the paper and nodded curtly. Then Susannah left the room, followed by Nancy and Bess.

When they got outside, Nancy noticed a rusted yellow car parked on the street. It hadn't been there before, and she wondered briefly if it was Hanif's.

"Hanif sure didn't seem too worried about his brother and niece," Bess remarked. "I mean, doesn't he care that they're missing?"

"I'm sure he cares," Susannah told her. "He's always been good at hiding his feelings." Then she sighed and added, "Although he's never bothered to hide his dislike for me."

"Hanif doesn't like you?" Nancy asked, curious. "Why not?"

"When Darius first moved to America, he planned to stay for only a few years, just to get the work experience. Then he was going to come back to Cairo." Susannah paused. "But then he met me. We got married and had Leila, and Darius decided that we should stay in America. Hanif always blamed me for that. He thinks that if it hadn't been for me, his brother would have returned to Egypt. Both their parents are dead," she added, "so Darius is Hanif's only close relative."

"I see," Nancy said thoughtfully. "Listen, Susannah, I got the feeling that Hanif wasn't telling us the whole truth."

Susannah stopped in her tracks. "What? You mean, you think he knows where Darius and Leila are?"

"It's just a hunch, nothing more," Nancy said hastily. "He acted a little strange when you were talking about Darius and Leila."

"Plus there's that entry in his desk calendar about the Hotel Nadr," Bess reminded her.

"Right," Nancy said, nodding. "Let's go back to our hotel. We're supposed to meet the guys there, anyway. And while we're waiting for them, we can call the Hotel Nadr and find out if they have any guests fitting Darius's and Leila's descriptions."

"You think Darius and Leila might be staying there?" Susannah said hopefully.

"It's a definite possibility," Nancy told her. "But even if they aren't, something tells me that the Hotel Nadr might be connected to them somehow."

Joe glanced around the cell at the crumbling cement walls and the dilapidated bunk beds. "Now I can brag to all my friends that I've been in an Egyptian jail," he told Frank.

"Very funny," Frank replied.

Joe's expression turned grim. "Why are they keeping us here, anyway? So we were carrying a couple of knives—so what?"

"So I'm sure they didn't think that was too cool," Frank said. "And we didn't have our passports with us, remember? They had to go to the hotel to get them." He frowned. "This is a major waste of time. Kimball is running around out there with a bomb, and we're stuck in here."

Just then a guard came up to their cell, a ring of keys jangling noisily in his hand. He unlocked the door, then waved for the Hardys to follow him. "*Yallah!*" he said loudly.

As he walked out of the cell, Joe took one last look at the cramped, depressing space. "You *must* tell us the name of your decorator



before we leave," he called out pleasantly to the guard.

The Hardys were taken to an interrogation room. The two police officers they'd met earlier were there, seated at a long folding table. Joe recalled that their names were Gharib and Naggar.

"Sit down, please," Gharib ordered them. The Hardys complied. "The manager at the Grand Hotel Misr gave us your passports. We have several questions."

Joe shifted uncomfortably in his seat. He knew the passports had passed muster at JFK and Cairo Airport, but was it possible that these men had discovered them to be fakes?

"What is your purpose in Cairo?" Gharib asked them crisply.

"We're here with our wives on our honeymoons," Frank explained.

Naggar raised one eyebrow. "Your honeymoons? Where are your wives, then?"

"They're shopping," Joe spoke up. He winked at Naggar. "You know how it is with women, huh?"

Naggar stared at him with a stony expression. "What were you two doing in Old Cairo?"

Joe glanced at Frank, then said, "Um, actually, we were shopping, too. We wanted to buy some cuff links, and the hotel clerk told us that

the Khan al-Khalili bazaar was the place to go for them."

Gharib shuffled some papers that were on the table in front of him. "We received a report from one of the residents about a fight," he said after a moment. "Who were you fighting with?"

"Nobody," Frank said quickly. "I mean, some guys—let's see, there were three of them—jumped us in the alley and tried to steal our wallets. They all had knives. We managed to take the knives away from two of them, but then suddenly all three of them took off running." He added, "I guess they saw you coming."

Joe stared at his brother with newfound admiration and wondered how he'd been able to come up with such a great story so fast.

"We didn't see any men other than you," Naggar said, his eyes narrowing in suspicion.

"It's the truth," Joe told him firmly. "They really were there, and they really did try to take our wallets." Remembering that he was supposed to be Cooper Addison, he added haughtily, "I don't understand why we're being detained in this manner. Our father is a very important international banker. I'm sure he wouldn't be too pleased if he found out how you were treating us."

Naggar and Gharib exchanged a few words

in Arabic. After a moment Gharib said, "You will receive no special treatment from us, regardless of who you are. We must look into this matter further. Until our investigation is complete, you will return to your cell." His tone grew ominous. "If we discover that you have been lying to us, Cole and Cooper Addison, you will be extremely sorry."

"I wonder where Cole and Cooper could be?" Nancy said.

She, Bess, and Susannah were hanging out in the girls' room in the suite at the Grand Hotel Misr. As soon as they'd gotten there, Nancy had called the Hotel Nadr and found that there were no guests fitting Darius's and Leila's descriptions. Since then the three of them had been discussing the case and awaiting the Hardys' return.

Bess, who was lying on the floor flipping through an Arabic fashion magazine, glanced up. "What time is it, anyway?"

"It's two," Susannah told her. "What time were they supposed to meet us?"

"Half an hour ago," Nancy replied. She wondered if the Hardys were tracking down a lead that they couldn't leave. On the other hand, she thought, maybe they were in trouble.

Then she had an idea. She picked up the

phone and called the front desk. "Hi, this is Rebecca Addison in the penthouse suite."

"Yes, Mrs. Addison," the clerk said immediately.

"Were there any messages for us this morning?"

"No, Mrs. Addison, no messages."

Discouraged, Nancy hung up. "I guess they didn't try to call us," she told her friends.

Bess snapped her magazine shut. "I don't know about you guys, but I'm starving. Maybe we should just have lunch without them."

"That's not a bad idea." Susannah looked at Nancy. "I mean, if it's okay with you. I'd like to get over to Bishara Yasseen's TV studio this afternoon, if possible."

"Darius's ex-girlfriend," Nancy said, nodding. "That's a good idea. We can leave a note for Cole and Cooper, and tell them we'll see them at dinner."

After a quick lunch of lamb kebabs and stuffed grape leaves at a nearby café, Nancy and her friends headed over to the Channel 14 studio. It was a modern one-story building in the business district of Cairo. Nancy marveled at the contrast between this section of town, which was teeming with high-rises and fancy shops, and Old Cairo, with its narrow, winding alleys and dusty stalls.

Inside the studio, a young receptionist greeted them from behind an enormous glass desk.

*"Bitkallam ingleezi?"* Susannah asked her. Nancy recognized the phrase from the guidebook: "Do you speak English?"

"Yes," the receptionist replied. "Do you have an appointment with someone?"

"I need to see Bishara Yasseen regarding an urgent matter," Susannah replied. "My husband is an old friend of hers. It'll take only a few minutes of her time."

The receptionist frowned, then picked up a phone and punched in a number. She spoke a few words in Arabic, then hung up. Almost immediately the door behind her opened, and a young woman with glasses and long black hair appeared. "I'm Jamila, Bishara's assistant," she said pleasantly. "Bishara is extremely busy right now. Perhaps there is something I can help you with."

"But I *must* see her," Susannah replied passionately. She told Jamila the story of Leila's disappearance. "So you see, it's urgent that I speak to any and all of Darius's friends," she finished. "It's my only hope. Otherwise, my daughter may be lost to me forever."

Jamila looked at her sympathetically. "Let me see what I can do," she said, and disappeared through the door. After a few minutes

she popped her head back out. "Come with me, please."

Susannah threw Nancy and Bess a hopeful smile. Nancy squeezed her arm. Then the three of them followed Jamila through the door and down a long hallway. They passed at least a dozen men and women, some with clipboards. They all seemed to be running around frantically and yelling out to one another.

"Hectic place," Nancy remarked.

"It seems kind of exciting to me," Bess replied, her eyes shining.

They soon reached a closed door near the end of the hall. As Jamila opened it, she glanced over her shoulder and whispered, "Bishara can see you for only a few minutes, all right? She is getting ready to do a show."

"Thank you so much," Susannah whispered back gratefully.

When Susannah, Nancy, and Bess walked into the office, they found Bishara sitting behind her desk. She was a tiny, attractive woman with close-cropped black hair and catlike brown eyes. She wore a sleek turquoise suit that complemented her tawny complexion.

Nancy sensed immediately that Bishara was not glad to see them. She stood up, extended a perfectly manicured hand to Susannah and

murmured, "I have to be on the air shortly, so please be brief." She stared at Nancy and Bess suspiciously. "And who are these people?"

"These are my friends Rebecca and Nikki Addison," Susannah explained. "They're helping me find Leila. I don't know if your assistant told you, but I have reason to believe that Darius—" Then she stopped and gasped.

Nancy turned to her. "Susannah? Susannah, what is it?"

Susannah pointed a trembling finger at something on the floor next to Bishara's desk. It was a small stuffed bear with fuzzy pink fur and a bright green ribbon tied around its neck.

"That toy!" Susannah exclaimed. "It belongs to Leila. She's been here!"

# Chapter

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## Nine

**W**HAT?" NANCY CRIED OUT in astonishment.

Susannah started to pick up the stuffed bear, but before she could reach it, the reporter snatched it away.

"Don't be absurd," Bishara said sharply, putting the bear in one of her desk drawers. "This belongs to my niece. She was here earlier."

"But—" Susannah protested.

"I bought it for her myself, at a department store on Twenty-sixth July Street," Bishara cut in. "They have dozens of bears just like this one—go see for yourself."



Nancy studied the reporter closely. Her instincts told her that Bishara could be lying, but she wasn't sure. "So you haven't seen Darius and Leila recently?" she asked her.

"Of course not," Bishara snapped, her brown eyes flashing. "I've never met Leila, and I haven't seen Darius in over ten years." She turned to Susannah. "I'm very sorry you are having trouble with your husband—"

"Ex-husband," Susannah corrected her.

"Ex-husband, whatever. I'm afraid I can't help you." Bishara picked up some notes and stood up. "Now, if you will excuse me, I have to get ready for my show. Jamila!"

There was a second door in Bishara's office, to the right of her desk. It swung open, and Jamila came rushing through it. "Yes?"

"Please show these people out," Bishara told her. She smiled tightly at Susannah. "I wish you luck in your search. Goodbye." And with that, she breezed past everyone and disappeared into the hallway.

When Gharib and Naggar called the Hardys into the interrogation room for the second time that day, the police officers seemed to be considerably less happy than earlier. It occurred to Frank that this did not bode well for him and Joe.

"Sit down," Gharib ordered them. When

they'd done so, he added, "We found a witness who has corroborated your story. A young boy saw three men with knives about to ambush you. He claims you only defended yourselves."

"See? I told you we were telling the truth." Joe pushed his chair back and stood up. "So we can go now, right?"

"Sit!" Naggar said gruffly. Joe instantly complied.

Frank wondered if Naggar and Gharib looked unhappy because he and Joe had turned out to be innocent. Now they would not only have to let the Hardys go, but also track down three new men: Mahfouz and his thugs.

Naggar glanced through some notes. "Before you leave, we have some more questions about these men. You must also give us your exact itineraries for however long you plan to be in Egypt. If the men are caught, we will need you to identify them."

This took forty-five minutes, after which the police let Frank and Joe go. Once in the street, Joe turned to Frank and shook his head gravely. "That was not my idea of a good time. Remind me never to get arrested again."

"No problem." Frank pointed to a phone booth. "I want to call Nancy and Bess and tell them what's going on. We missed our lunch

date with them, and they're probably worried."

When he called, there was no answer in the girls' penthouse suite. "They're probably out chasing down Susannah's ex-husband," he said, hanging up. "We can try them again later."

Joe glanced up and down the busy street, which was lined with government buildings. "Let's grab a cab to the Khan al-Khalili bazaar, okay? We've got to get a line on our cuff link. We've wasted too much time as it is."

"Definitely," Frank agreed. "This little delay was bad news. For all we know, Kimball's detonated the bomb by now."

Joe grimaced. "I don't even want to think about that."

The Hardys finally reached the Khan al-Khalili bazaar half an hour later. They passed through the entrance of the bazaar, which was situated in front of the Al Azhar Mosque. Like the rest of Old Cairo, the bazaar consisted of labyrinthine alleys, but Frank noticed that the alleys in the bazaar were even more crowded with shops and stalls. The crowds were amazing: wall-to-wall people everywhere. Many of them were bargaining—dickering with the merchants to get them to reduce the price of their goods.

*Secrets of the Nile*

As Frank and Joe walked, they passed colorful displays of gold and silver jewelry, perfumes, spices, silks, camel saddles, antiques, and carpets. "Maybe we should buy souvenirs for Mom and Dad and Aunt Gertrude, huh?" Joe suggested.

"Not now," Frank told him. "We have a job to do, remember?" He pulled a piece of paper out of his pocket. "The clerk at the hotel told us to hit these shops. I hope we can find them."

Fortunately they came across the first one, Bellenis Brothers, within a few minutes. Inside, they found a middle-aged man standing behind a counter. He smiled at them pleasantly.

"Greetings, gentlemen," he said. "May I offer you some coffee or perhaps some karkade?" He pointed to his own glass, which was filled with a raspberry-colored liquid.

"Um, no, thank you," Frank said. "We were wondering whether you made cuff links with hieroglyphs on them."

The man shook his head. "No, no cuff links here. But I make beautiful necklaces and bracelets. Please, come closer and take a look. You will not find better handiwork anywhere in the souk . . ."

Frank and Joe had two more such experi-

ences after they left Bellenis Brothers. But when they got to Azizi's, the last shop on the hotel clerk's list, their luck turned.

The owner of the place, Azizi, was a short, plump man in his forties. He was dressed in a white silk galabia and a tall green turban. Like the other merchants, he offered the Hardys a beverage, which they declined.

"We're interested in cuff links," Frank told Azizi. "Do you make them?"

"Yes, of course." Azizi smiled as he waved a hand over his counter. "We have many fine ones here. We can also make them to your specifications."

Frank and Joe exchanged a glance. "Have you ever made a pair with the water hieroglyph on them?" Joe asked Azizi.

Azizi's smile disappeared. At the same time he rang a small bell that was sitting on his counter. "Yes. Why do you ask?"

Frank couldn't figure out why Azizi was suddenly acting so strangely. Then he heard a noise behind him. He turned around and saw two tall, muscular men standing on either side of the doorway, their arms crossed rigidly in front of their chests. Their eyes were cold and impassive.

"My assistants," Azizi said, by way of explanation. "You have not answered my question.

Why are you interested in cuff links with the water hieroglyph?"

"We found one like that on the street," Joe told him. "We thought it might belong to one of your customers."

Azizi frowned. "May I see it, please?"

Joe started to reach into his pocket. But just then Frank stepped on his foot, hard.

"Ow!" Joe cried out.

"Is something the matter?" Azizi asked sharply.

Joe looked flustered. "I—that is, I have this old football injury." He held up his right elbow. "It acts up once in a while, especially in the heat."

Oh, boy, Frank thought. "Listen, about the cuff link," he said to Azizi. "We left it at our hotel. If you could just tell us the name and address of the customer you made the cuff links for, we'll be glad to see that he gets the missing one back."

Azizi shook his head. "I am sorry. I cannot do that." He leaned across the counter, and his expression was dead serious. "I must insist that you bring the cuff link to my shop as soon as possible."

Frank's mind was racing. Did Azizi know Kimball and Mahfouz? Was he protecting them for some reason?

Then he fixed his eyes on Azizi. "Okay, we'll bring the cuff link by," he said, "tomorrow."

"Where could those guys be?" Bess murmured anxiously. "It's after seven!"

Nancy glanced at Bess, who was sitting on the couch with Susannah in the hotel suite. They had the TV on, but they weren't really watching it.

"I can't believe they haven't even called," Nancy murmured. Deep down she was sure something terrible had happened to them. There was no other explanation for their silence.

Then something on the television caught her attention. It was Bishara, delivering the evening news. "What is she saying, Susannah?" Nancy asked.

Susannah listened intently for a few moments. "She's—let's see, she's talking about the deterioration of the banks of the Nile due to overdevelopment."

"Gee, that sounds real interesting," Bess said, pretending to yawn.

"Actually, it is," Susannah told her. "In fact, the Aquarius Group might be working on a project to help solve that problem."

Just then the phone rang. "That must be Cole and Cooper," Nancy said, rushing to answer it. "Hello?"

*Secrets of the Nile*

"Hello, Nancy Drew," a deep male voice whispered hoarsely. "Or is this Bess Marvin?"

Nancy started. "You have the wrong number," she said quickly.

"I don't think so," the voice went on. "I have a message for you: You and your friends had better get out of Egypt on the next plane, or you're going to find yourselves at the bottom of the Nile River. Do I make myself clear?"



# Chapter

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## Ten

**W**HO IS THIS?" Nancy asked sharply. But the caller had already hung up, and she found herself talking to a dial tone.

"What's going on, Rebecca?" Bess asked her worriedly. "Who was that on the phone?"

Nancy realized that she couldn't talk about Kimball in front of Susannah. "Um, wrong number," she said, staring meaningfully at Bess.

Bess seemed to get the hint. She nodded quickly and said, "Oh."

Just then the door to the suite burst open, and the Hardys walked in. "Honey, I'm home!" Joe called out cheerfully.

Bess jumped up from the couch, her hands

on her hips. "Where have you been?" she scolded them. "First you miss our lunch date, then you don't call us all afternoon—"

Frank groaned. "Our lunch date. We totally forgot." He went up to Nancy and put his arm around her. Impulsively, Nancy gave him a hug.

"I'm sorry. Something came up," he whispered in her ear. "We tried to call you earlier, but you weren't here." He glanced at Susannah as he said this, and Nancy nodded in understanding.

Nancy introduced Frank and Joe to Susannah. When Joe started asking Susannah questions about her daughter, Nancy took the opportunity to slip into the other room with Frank.

"I want to hear all about your day," she said to him when they were alone. "But first I have to tell you something. Just before you guys showed up, I got a call from Kimball—or Mahfouz."

Nancy went on to describe the call. "It had to be one of them, because he knew Bess's name and my name," she finished. "It was pretty spooky."

Frank shook his head angrily. "Kimball is really serious about getting us off his tail," he murmured. Then he told Nancy about the encounter with Mahfouz and his two thugs.

He also told her about being arrested, spending the afternoon in jail, and visiting Azizi's shop.

"Do you think Azizi's involved in all this?" Nancy asked him.

"I think so," Frank replied. "I want to go back to his shop with that cuff link tomorrow. If my hunch is right and Azizi's connected to Kimball, then Kimball will come by to pick up the cuff link—or else Azizi will send a messenger with it to Kimball's hotel. Either way, we've got him."

"Sounds like a good plan."

Frank fixed his eyes on Nancy's. "Okay, enough about me. Let's talk about you. Did you get anywhere with Susannah's case today?"

Nancy told him about meeting Hanif Rashad and Bishara Yasseen. "I think Bishara's definitely hiding something," she said thoughtfully. "I want to go back to her studio first thing tomorrow and talk to her assistant, Jamila. I'm hoping she might have seen Darius and Leila around."

Frank was silent as he digested this information. "I have an idea," he said after a moment. "Why don't I go with you and Susannah to the TV studio tomorrow, and Joe and Bess can go to Azizi's?"

Nancy raised her eyebrows. "Why?"

"Two reasons," Frank replied. "First of all, I don't like the idea of you and Bess running around Cairo on your own, especially after that phone call. And second, we're a married couple, remember? It might be good to spend more time together."

Nancy smiled at him. "As for your first reason, I appreciate the knight-in-shining-armor bit, but I can take care of myself. As for your second reason, I guess I have to agree. I mean, Susannah might buy the fact that we spent one day apart, but two in a row? No way."

"Great," Frank said cheerfully. "It's settled, then." He reached for the phone. "Now, how about I call down to the desk and get a recommendation for a good place to have dinner? I don't know about you, but Joe and I haven't eaten since breakfast. That jail thing kind of screwed up our lunch schedule."

On the recommendation of the hotel clerk, Frank, Joe, Nancy, and Bess had decided to have dinner at the Oasis Club down the street. Since it was an elegant supper club, they had changed into evening clothes: black tuxedos for the guys, and black silk cocktail dresses for the girls. Susannah had begged off, saying she wanted to make some calls to the States.

The Oasis Club had pink marble walls,

mosaic tile floors, white wicker tables and chairs, and potted palm trees. It had a stage, a dance floor, and a twelve-piece band. Waiters in silk robes and red turbans flitted around busily with trays of food and silver champagne buckets.

The first thing Joe noticed after he and the others were seated was the belly dancers. There were three of them onstage, wearing jewel-colored veils and sashes. They were swaying rhythmically to a slow, haunting song.

"Hey, this is a great place," Joe said, staring at the dancers appreciatively. Then he picked up the menu, which was in English. "Whoa—I take that back. Are these prices for real?"

"You're rich. You're not supposed to complain about these things," Bess reminded him as she studied her own menu. "Hmm . . . I think I'll have the Egyptian caviar as an appetizer and some grilled prawns as an entrée. Or should I have a fruit-and-cheese course first?" She grinned. "Maybe I'll have both."

Joe sighed and glanced around the room. Just then he spotted an even better sight than the belly dancers—Dominique Moreau. She was standing near the stage, talking to a man.

The belly dancers had finished their number. Joe clapped automatically with the rest of the crowd, but his attention was riveted on Dominique.

He elbowed his brother, who was sitting to his left. "Psst," he whispered. "Check it out—Dominique is here."

"Who?" Frank whispered back. "Oh, yeah, her." He followed Joe's gaze. "I'm telling you, Joe, you've got to stop—" Then he gasped.

"What is it?" Joe asked, alarmed.

"That man talking to Dominique," Frank whispered. "I think it's Kimball."

Joe rolled his eyes. "Yeah, right. Like there's any way she'd know that sleazebag."

"I'm telling you, it looks like him," Frank insisted.

Nancy glanced up from her menu. "What's going on, guys?"

"Our friend Kimball might be here," Frank told her tersely. "You three stay put. I'm going to check it out."

"I'm going with you," Joe told him.

As Joe and Frank started across the dance floor, the band began to play a lively tune, and it was hard getting past all the dancing couples. At one point Joe bumped into an elderly man who thought he was cutting in on him. The man stepped back and graciously offered Joe his dance partner, a sweet-looking gray-haired woman.

"Uh, no, thank you," Joe said, backing away. "Maybe another time."

By the time Frank and Joe made it through

the crowd to Dominique, the man she'd been talking to was gone. She was standing by herself, sipping champagne and checking her watch.

"Dominique," Frank called out.

She turned and glanced at the Hardys. Her face lit up. "Cole and Cooper Addison. It is very nice to see you."

Joe was about to compliment her on her outfit—a midnight blue dress with spaghetti straps—but before he had a chance to do so, Frank moved to Dominique's side and said, "That man you were just talking to—who was he?"

Dominique raised one eyebrow. "Why do you want to know?"

"Oh, we thought he looked kind of familiar," Joe spoke up. "Isn't he a famous actor or something?"

Dominique gave him a strange smile. "No, he is not an actor. He is just a tourist like me, from Paris. He was asking me for the time."

"Are you sure about that?" Frank pressed her.

"Of course I am sure," Dominique replied, sounding slightly miffed. "Why would I make a mistake about something like that?"

Joe gave Frank an I-told-you-so look. He knew Dominique couldn't have been talking to a crook like Kimball.

The band switched to a slow, sultry love song. Perfect, Joe thought, and he held out his hand to Dominique. "Would you like to—"

"Cole! Cooper!"

Joe turned around. Nancy and Bess were walking across the dance floor toward them. Rats, he thought in frustration. Seriously bad timing.

"Did you, um, have any luck finding what you were looking for?" Bess asked Joe and Frank pointedly.

Frank shook his head. "No. Maybe another time." He held his arm out to Nancy. "Care to dance?"

"Love to," she replied with a smile.

Dominique was staring curiously at Joe and Bess. Bess was glaring at Joe. She nodded slightly in the direction of the dance floor.

"Oh," Joe said. "Hey, Nikki—do you want to dance, too?"

Bess grabbed Joe's hand. "I thought you'd never ask."

The next morning after breakfast, Frank, Nancy, and Susannah headed over to the Channel 14 studio. Nancy could tell that Susannah was really excited about the prospect of questioning Bishara Yasseen's assistant, Jamila.

"She was so nice to us yesterday," Susannah



said as they walked into the building: "I just know she'll be able to help us."

Once in the lobby, the receptionist rang Jamila's extension. "She's not answering," the woman said, hanging up.

Susannah turned to Nancy and Frank and frowned in disappointment. Just then Jamila came walking through the door. Her head was bent, and she was scribbling something in a notebook.

"Jamila!" Nancy called out.

Jamila smiled in recognition. "Oh, hello. Are you here to see Bishara?"

"Actually, we're here to see you," Nancy told her. She introduced her "husband," then asked, "Have you got five minutes? We just have a few questions."

Jamila looked at her curiously. "I suppose I do," she said after a moment. "Come to my office."

Nancy, Susannah, and Frank followed Jamila to a small, cluttered office. Nancy noticed that the door between Jamila's office and the one adjoining it was closed.

"Bishara is in her office with some people," Jamila said, nodding at the closed door. "She asked not to be interrupted." She sat down at her desk and waved for the others to sit down, too. "What can I do for you?"

*Secrets of the Nile*

"As you know, we're looking for Susannah's daughter, Leila," Nancy began.

"We want to know if you've seen her or Darius around the studio any time recently," Susannah finished. "I have a photograph of them here, in my purse."

Just then a loud shriek came from the other side of the closed door. "It's a bug" came the voice. "Kill it, Daddy! Kill it!"

Susannah turned as pale as a ghost. "That's her!" she cried out. "That's Leila!"

# Chapter

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# Eleven

NANCY RAN to the closed door and flung it open. Standing in Bishara's office were a handsome dark-haired man and a little girl: Darius and Leila. Behind them was a startled-looking Bishara.

When Susannah saw her daughter, she let out a sob of joy. "Leila, it's you! Leila darling, it's Mommy."

Leila broke into a delighted grin. "Hi, Mommy!"

Before anyone could make a move, Darius scooped the little girl up in his arms. He was obviously in a total panic.

"Go back to America, Susannah," he said in a low, trembling voice. "It's for your own

good." And with that he turned and rushed out the door leading to the hallway.

"Darius, *no!*" Susannah screamed.

Without wasting another second, Nancy took off after him. "Come on, Susannah," she shouted over her shoulder. "Frank, you stay here with Bishara."

"Got it," Frank said.

By the time Nancy and Susannah reached the doorway, Darius and Leila were halfway down the hall. Nancy was amazed at what a fast runner Darius was. But there was no way he could keep up that pace while carrying a four-year-old child, Nancy thought.

Just then a guy with a clipboard came rushing out of one of the offices and bumped into Nancy and Susannah. All three of them went tumbling to the floor.

The guy began muttering angrily in Arabic. Susannah apologized to him as she and Nancy got to their feet and continued on their way. But by that time Darius and Leila were out of sight.

"They must have left the building," Nancy said breathlessly. "Come on, let's hurry."

Once outside, Nancy spotted Darius at the curb. He was just getting into the driver's side of a small red car and starting the ignition.

"He's getting away!" Susannah cried out.

Nancy ran up to the red car but not in time.

A Nancy Drew & Hardy Boys SuperMystery

Darius sped off down the street. Thinking quickly, she hailed a cab, and she and Susannah jumped into it.

"Where you ladies like to go today?" the driver said pleasantly. "Pyramids? City of Dead? Museum?"

"Follow that red car," Nancy told him urgently. "And don't let it out of your sight."

"Let me do all the talking, okay?" Joe whispered to Bess. They were standing outside Azizi's shop in the Khan al-Khalili bazaar. "You just stand there and smile or something."

When there was no reply, Joe turned to look at Bess. She wasn't there.

"Oh, great. Nikki? Hey, Nikki!" he called out loudly.

Then he spotted her. She was standing at a stall across the alley. She had a silver necklace in her hands, and she appeared to be bargaining heatedly with the merchant.

Joe shook his head and glanced impatiently at his watch. After a moment Bess came up to him wearing the necklace.

"Hi," she said brightly. "Isn't this an awesome necklace? Can you believe I got it for half price?"

"Amazing," Joe said dryly. "Now, if you're through shopping, we've got work to do." He

*Secrets of the Nile*

put his hand on her elbow and steered her into Azizi's shop.

Inside, Azizi was behind the counter polishing a brass urn.

"Yes? May I help you?" Azizi began. Then he fixed his eyes on Joe and frowned. "Oh, it is you. Do you have the cuff link?"

"Would I let you down, Azizi old buddy?" Joe said cheerfully. He reached into his pocket, pulled out the cuff link, and placed it on the counter. He was glad that he and Frank had thought to take a picture of it back at the hotel; at least they would have a record of it. "Here it is, good as new."

Azizi snatched it up and without another word disappeared into the back of his store.

Bess stared at Joe, confused. "What's with him?"

"I guess he doesn't believe in long good-byes," Joe remarked. "Let's go."

Once outside, Joe glanced around the alley. He and Bess needed to plant themselves in a spot where they could see all the action in and out of Azizi's shop. His hope was that either Kimball, Mahfouz, or one of their thugs would come to pick up the cuff link, or that Azizi would send a messenger with it to wherever Kimball was staying.

Joe decided on a space between two stalls

A Nancy Drew & Hardy Boys SuperMystery

just thirty feet from the entrance to Azizi's store. That way he and Bess could pretend to be browsing while keeping an eye on the shop.

It didn't take long for something to happen. Just five minutes later one of Azizi's tall, burly assistants left the shop with a small package in one hand.

"Okay, time to roll," Joe whispered to Bess.

The two of them followed the assistant through the bazaar and onto a main street. The assistant jumped into a cab, and Joe and Bess did likewise. Ten minutes later the first cab stopped in front of a hotel in the business district.

"This is great," Joe said excitedly as he and Bess got out of their cab. "I'll bet this is where Kimball is staying."

"Should we follow that guy into the hotel, or what?" Bess asked him.

Joe considered this for a moment. He didn't want to have to tackle Kimball and possibly Mahfouz *plus* the tall, burly assistant. "We'll wait out here till he comes out, then make our move," he said finally. "Come on, let's hide behind that palm tree over there."

When the assistant came out a few minutes later, he was still carrying the package. "Hey, what's going on?" Joe muttered, puzzled.

The assistant stopped in his tracks, glanced

around, then sat down at a nearby bench. He took a pack of cigarettes out of his shirt pocket and began smoking.

"You wait here and keep an eye on him," Joe told Bess quickly. "I'm going inside to find out if Kimball is staying here."

"What do I do if he tries to leave—tackle him?" Bess asked, raising her eyebrows.

"Use your charm," Joe told her. "I'll be back in a second, okay?"

Inside, Joe went up to the desk clerk. "Welcome to the Hotel Nadr," the man said with a smile. "May I help you?"

"I'm looking for one of your guests," Joe told him. "He's about forty with silvery black hair and a triangular scar on his left cheek."

"Ah, yes. That would be Mr. Jones," the clerk said. "I am sorry, but he checked out about half an hour ago. I believe he is on his way to Aswan, in Upper Egypt."

The cab ground to a halt. Nancy realized that they were stuck in a major traffic jam; the street was wall-to-wall cars crawling along at a snail's pace, the drivers blaring their horns angrily. The air outside was yellow with smog and heat. Darius's car was nowhere in sight.

"We've lost him, haven't we?" Susannah asked Nancy tearfully.



Nancy frowned. In the dense traffic, their prospects didn't look good. "I'm afraid we have," she said slowly.

"I can't believe we were so close," Susannah said, tears running down her cheeks. "Leila was right there in Bishara's office, and Darius took her away from me."

Nancy put her hand on Susannah's arm. "At least now you know she's okay," she said soothingly. Then she added, "What did Darius mean when he told you to go back to America for your own good?"

"I have no idea," Susannah said with a shrug. "I figured he was just threatening me so I'd stop following him."

Just then Nancy spotted something interesting in the rearview mirror. Several cars behind their cab was a rusty yellow car. It looked like the same one she'd seen parked outside Hanif's apartment.

She turned in her seat and tried to make out the driver, but the car was too far away. Was it Hanif? she wondered. If so, was he tailing Darius, too?

Nancy pointed the car out to Susannah. "Do you recognize that car? Is it Hanif's?"

"I have no idea what kind of car he drives," Susannah replied. She stared quizzically at Nancy. "You think he might be following us?"

"Maybe," Nancy murmured. "I saw a car like that in front of his building yesterday."

Just then the driver spoke up. "Would you like me to turn off at the next street and head back to town?"

"I suppose," Nancy said. Then a thought occurred to her. "Wait a second. Where does this street go?"

"The airport, miss."

Susannah gasped. "The airport. That means that Darius—"

"Might be planning to skip the country," Nancy finished grimly. She leaned forward in her seat and told the driver, "When this traffic jam breaks up, please take us to the airport."

They got there forty-five minutes later. The terminal was packed with people, but Darius and Leila weren't among them.

"I have an idea," Nancy told Susannah. "I want to show the picture of Darius and Leila that Susannah let us see to all the airline clerks. If they did come here and if they did board a plane, someone might remember them."

Susannah's eyes lit up. "That sounds like a terrific plan."

"We'd better have a good reason why we're looking for them, though—the airlines are pretty strict about releasing the names of pas-

sengers," Nancy mused. "Let's say that Darius is a good friend of yours and that he left something valuable at your house this morning—maybe one of his credit cards."

Nancy and Susannah spent the next hour going from counter to counter. The lines were long, which made their inquiries even more time-consuming, but when they got to the Inter-Egypt counter, they had some luck.

The clerk, a young man with a dark beard and mustache, stared at the picture for a long time. "I do remember them," he said finally. "A father and a daughter. They were here about an hour and a half ago."

"That's great," Susannah said excitedly. "Where were they going? Has their plane taken off yet?"

The clerk punched something into a computer, then glanced up. "Here we go—Darius Rashad and Leila Porter-Rashad. Yes, their plane did take off already. They were on the noon flight to Aswan, in Upper Egypt."

"The captain has given the signal for take-off," the flight attendant said pleasantly. "Please fasten your seat belts and make sure that all your carry-on luggage is stowed safely under your seats." Then she repeated the message in Arabic.

Frank buckled his seat belt, then turned to Nancy. "I still can't believe that both our cases are taking us to Aswan," he said in a low voice.

After grilling Bishara unsuccessfully—she'd claimed that Darius and Leila had shown up out of the blue seconds before Nancy, Frank, and Susannah got there and that she didn't know who the father and daughter were—Frank had returned to the Grand Hotel Misr. Eventually Joe and Bess had shown up with the news that Kimball had taken off for Aswan. Soon after that, Nancy had returned from her mission, saying that Darius and Leila had fled for the same place. All four of them had then packed their bags in a hurry and, together with Susannah, raced to the airport to catch the next flight to Aswan.

"It's lucky for us that things turned out this way, though," Nancy said to him. "I don't know what we would have done if we'd had to split up. I mean, we're supposed to be two married couples, right?"

Frank grinned. "Right."

He leaned back in his seat and stared out the window at the swaying palm trees and the dusty runway. The sun was setting, and the sky was filled with intense shades of pink and gold.

Then he fixed his eyes on Nancy again. He couldn't help noticing how great she looked in her turquoise dress.

Stop it, Hardy, he told himself.

"What did you say?" Nancy asked him.

Frank started. "Uh, I was just wondering what you told Susannah—you know, about the fact that Joe and I would be going to Aswan with the three of you."

"I told her that we'd all been planning to go there anyway, to see the sights, so we just persuaded you to go a little earlier," Nancy explained. She glanced at Susannah, who was sitting with Bess and Joe two rows ahead. "Don't worry. She has no idea what you're really up to. Speaking of which," she added, "you said that Joe followed Aziz's messenger to some hotel, right? Was the desk clerk really sure it was Kimball who'd just checked out?"

"The description fit exactly," Frank replied. "I mean, how many guys are running around Cairo with a triangular scar on their left cheek, right? Besides, the Hotel Nadr clerk said that—"

"The Hotel Nadr?" Nancy cut in sharply. "Are you sure that was the name of the hotel?"

Frank could tell from Nancy's eyes that she was onto something. "Definitely. Why?"

"That's the name of the hotel that was written in Hanif Rashad's desk calendar,"

Nancy told him. Then she shook her head. "It must be a coincidence. I mean, there's no way Hanif could be connected to Kimball, right?"

Frank was silent as he mulled this over. There *was* no way they could be connected. The coincidences seemed to be piling up, though: Kimball, Darius, and Leila all going to Aswan on the same day . . . the Hotel Nadr . . .

"Frank? What are you thinking?" Nancy prodded him.

Just then a familiar voice rang out. "Frank? Who's Frank? I thought your name was Cole."

## Chapter

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## Twelve

**F**RANK AND NANCY LOOKED UP. Dominique Moreau's aunt was standing in the aisle, eyeing them suspiciously. Frank wondered how long she'd been standing there.

"Oh, hi. Isabelle, isn't it?" Frank said, trying to keep his voice casual.

"Isabelle Moreau," she said crisply. "And you—I thought your name was Cole Addison."

"It is," Nancy said quickly, putting her arm through Frank's and smiling sweetly at him. "I'm Rebecca Addison, his wife. Frank is just a little nickname I call him sometimes—because he's so honest."

Isabelle frowned. Frank could tell that she

wasn't quite convinced. "So, are you on your way to Aswan?" he asked her, hoping to get her mind off the subject of his name.

"Yes," Isabelle replied. "Dominique and I decided to see the High Dam and the temple of Philae."

"That sounds great," Frank murmured, casting a brief worried glance in Joe's direction. He hoped his brother didn't know that Dominique was on the plane.

Just then a flight attendant came rushing up the aisle. "Excuse me, ma'am—you must sit down. We are about to take off."

"Yes, yes," Isabelle said irritably. "I was just on my way back from the washroom when I spotted these people I know." She turned to Frank and Nancy and nodded her head briskly. "Well, I'm sure we'll be seeing you again."

"I'm sure we will," Frank replied.

Frank watched as she took a seat across the aisle and one row back. Craning his neck, he could see Dominique in the window seat next to her aunt.

"That was close," Nancy whispered to him.

"It's not over," Frank whispered back. "Isabelle's got a bird's-eye view of us, and both she and Dominique can probably hear almost everything we say."

Nancy made a face. "Oh. That means—"



"That we should start acting a little more like Cole and Rebecca Addison and less like Frank Hardy and Nancy Drew," Frank whispered in her ear. With that, he put his arm around Nancy and pulled her close.

Out of the corner of his eye, Frank saw that Isabelle was watching them. Did she believe Nancy's story that "Frank" was a nickname? he wondered. How much of their conversation had she overheard?

Time was running out, Frank thought grimly. They had to find Kimball soon, and they couldn't afford to have Isabelle—or anyone else—blow their cover now.

"I don't get it," Bess murmured. "If Aswan is five hundred miles south of Cairo, why do they say it's in Upper Egypt?"

She, Nancy, and Susannah were sitting in an outdoor café in downtown Aswan. It was morning, and they were just finishing their breakfast of rolls and thick, sweet coffee. They'd gotten into Aswan the night before around dinnertime, checked into a hotel, and decided to get an early start the next day rather than stay up late to pursue their cases.

"It's confusing," Susannah said. "See, the Nile flows from south to north into the Mediterranean. So the southern part of the Nile is

upstream, and the area around it is called Upper Egypt. Get it?"

"I guess," Bess said doubtfully. Then she turned to Nancy. "Hey, Rebecca, where did our husbands go, anyway?"

"They wanted to check out the Tomb of the Aga Khan," Nancy replied. It was a lie, but she couldn't say so in front of Susannah. In reality, Frank and Joe had gone off to look for Kimball.

Nancy took one last sip of her coffee and glanced around. The sky was a dazzling blue, and the air was even balmy and warmer than it had been in Cairo. "Do you have any idea what Darius might be doing in Aswan?" she asked Susannah.

Susannah frowned and shook her head. "No idea."

"Did he ever mention having friends or relatives here?" Nancy prodded.

"No—" Susannah began. Then her green eyes lit up. "Actually, wait a second. He once mentioned that he had a cousin here. She lives at the edge of the desert."

"Great!" Bess said excitedly. "What's her name?"

Susannah closed her eyes and put her hands on her temples. "Tabitha. No, Tabia. That's it—Tabia. And her last name is Fakhry."

"We should definitely pay this Tabia Fakhry a visit," Nancy said eagerly.

An hour later Nancy and her friends found themselves standing in front of a dusty brown house with a flat roof and pale green shutters. Strings of dried peppers hung beside the doorway. It was one of many such houses in the small, quiet village just outside Aswan. Off in the distance, Nancy could see the edge of the vast Sahara Desert.

"I hope she's home," Susannah said as she raised her hand to knock.

After a moment a short, plump woman with long, dark hair answered the door. She was dressed in a white caftan, and her large amber eyes were outlined with kohl.

She smiled pleasantly at the three women and said something in Arabic. Susannah asked her if she spoke English.

"Yes," the woman replied. "May I help you?"

"Are you Tabia Fakhry?" Nancy asked her. The woman nodded.

"We'd like to talk to you, then," Susannah told her. "I'm Susannah Porter-Rashad. I was once married to your cousin Darius."

Tabia's smile disappeared. "You are—the wife of Darius?"

"Ex-wife," Susannah corrected her. "And

these are my friends, Rebecca and Nikki Addison. Please, may we come in?"

Tabia nodded uncertainly, then held the door open for them. Nancy wondered why she was acting so uncomfortable all of a sudden.

After Nancy and her friends had sat down, Tabia said, "May I offer you something to drink? Some coffee or cinnamon tea?"

They all declined. "I'll get right to the point," Susannah said, folding her hands in her lap. Nancy could tell she was nervous. "Darius took our daughter, Leila, from me a month ago and illegally brought her to this country. I have reason to think they're in Aswan, and I was wondering if you'd seen them or heard from them."

"I have not seen Darius in many years," Tabia replied simply. "Not since before he left for America."

"Does Darius have any other relatives or friends in Aswan?" Nancy asked Tabia.

Tabia shrugged. "I do not think so. But I cannot be sure."

Susannah glanced at Nancy and sighed dejectedly. "I guess it's back to square one, then."

"I guess it is," Nancy said, rising to her feet. Then something caught her eye.

There was a wastebasket next to her chair,

and in it was a piece of notepaper with a distinctive logo on it: a man carrying a water jug. Some Arabic words were scribbled under the logo.

Nancy picked up the piece of paper. "Susannah," she said slowly, "isn't this an image of Aquarius, the water-bearer? And didn't you say you and Darius work for a company called the Aquarius Group?"

Susannah snatched the paper from Nancy's hands. "This is Darius's handwriting!" she cried out.

Tabia had turned pale. "Please—that is nothing. Just a letter he wrote me many years ago."

"What does it say?" Bess asked Susannah.

"It says: 'I will never forget your kindness,'" Susannah translated. She fixed her eyes on Tabia. "He was here, wasn't he?"

"No—no," Tabia said shakily, as though she was about to cry.

Nancy walked over to Tabia and put a hand on her shoulder. "Tabia," she said gently, "I know you think you're protecting Darius, but you're not. He took Leila away from Susannah without permission."

Tabia hung her head. "That is not what he told me," she said, her voice barely above a whisper.

Nancy felt a rush of excitement. Tabia was about to tell them the truth. "When was he here, Tabia? And what exactly did he say to you?"

Tabia was silent for a long moment. "He came here last night with your little girl," she said finally, glancing nervously at Susannah. "They left this morning for Luxor. He made me swear I would tell no one."

"Luxor?" Susannah repeated. "Why Luxor?"

"It is very crowded there at this time of year. Darius thought that he and Leila could lose themselves among the tourists." Tabia added, "Also, he wanted to go to a place where he knew no one. Darius said that he was hiding from someone—that he was in terrible danger."

"That's a lie," Susannah said hotly. "He's just trying to keep Leila from me."

"He was not lying," Tabia told her in a serious voice. "He may be trying to keep Leila from you, but there is something more. I could tell by his eyes. He was terrified of something."

Nancy looked at Tabia quizzically. "Of what?"

"I am not sure," Tabia said grimly. "But whatever it is, it is very, very bad."

"I can't believe Dominique was on the plane yesterday and you didn't tell me," Joe complained to Frank.

The Hardys were walking down the main street of Aswan, which overlooked the Nile. They knew it was a long shot, but they had decided to go to the taxi services in town to see if any of the drivers had picked Kimball up at the airport the day before. So far they'd been to two places, without any luck.

"I'm getting a little worried about you, Joe," Frank said lightly. "I mean, how are you going to keep up your alias as Cooper Addison, newlywed, when you're totally obsessed with Dominique?" Then his voice turned serious. "I'm starting to wonder about her, anyway."

"What do you mean?" Joe demanded.

"I mean, first she turns up at the Oasis Club with a guy who looks like Kimball," Frank replied. "Then she and her aunt Isabelle leave Cairo for Aswan on our exact same flight. Don't you think that's a little, um, peculiar?"

Joe rolled his eyes. His brother sure had a tendency to go overboard with the detective thing sometimes, he thought. "Listen, Frank," he said. "Dominique explained about that guy at the Oasis Club. He was just asking her for the time. And so what if she and her aunt decided to come to Aswan the same time we did? It's probably just a coincidence. Aswan is

a huge tourist spot, right? Lots of people come here."

"Maybe," Frank said.

Joe looked at Frank meaningfully. "Speaking of being hung up on people, what about you and Nancy?"

Frank stopped in his tracks and glared at his brother. "What *about* Nancy and me? We're friends."

"Uh-huh," Joe said. "Right." He nodded toward a storefront on the corner, next to a carpet weaver's shop. "That must be the El Akbar Cab Company. Come on."

Frank started to say something, then clamped his mouth shut. He and Joe walked on in silence.

At El Akbar, the Hardys found the dispatcher behind the counter. "*Bitkallam ingleezi?*" Frank asked him.

"I speak a little English," the dispatcher replied. "You want to go somewhere?"

"We want information," Joe replied, stepping forward. "We need to know if one of your drivers picked up someone at the airport yesterday. We, um, have something we need to return to him." Then he proceeded to describe Kimball.

The dispatcher frowned, then glanced over his shoulder and barked out, "Omar!"

After a moment a short, stout man came



lumbering up to the counter. "Awiz eh?" he muttered.

The dispatcher spoke to him in rapid-fire Arabic. Then the man named Omar turned to the Hardys. "I picked up such a man at the airport yesterday, in the early afternoon," he said in slow, stilted English. "He had a mark on his left cheek, as you say—like this." He drew a triangle in the air.

Joe grinned at Frank. It was all he could do to keep from slamming his fist on the counter and shouting "Yes!"

He turned to the driver. "Where did you take this man? To a hotel?"

"To a building by the river," the driver replied. "I will take you there if you wish."

Fifteen minutes later Frank and Joe found themselves standing in front of what appeared to be an abandoned warehouse. It was on a deserted street that dead-ended at the Nile. There were no other people around.

"I don't understand why Kimball would go to an abandoned warehouse," Joe said, regarding the building doubtfully.

Frank shrugged. "I don't know either, but we'd better check it out."

Joe walked up to the door, pressed his ear against it, and listened carefully. He heard no sounds inside. He jiggled the doorknob, which

was locked. "Pass me a credit card," he said to Frank.

Frank handed him one, and after a few minutes Joe had the flimsy lock undone. The two of them stepped inside.

Joe found a light switch by the door and turned it on. The room was instantly bathed in a white fluorescent glow. He glanced around and saw that the warehouse wasn't exactly unused. Its cement walls were lined with metal shelves that held hundreds of cardboard boxes. Each of the boxes was sealed and stamped with a bird logo.

"I wonder who owns this place?" Frank mused.

"And what was Kimball doing here?" Joe added. He went up to one of the shelves and looked closely at the boxes. "I mean, why wouldn't he go straight to a hotel? Why come to this dump?"

"Maybe he was meeting somebody," Frank guessed.

Just then Joe spotted a crumpled slip of paper on the floor near one of the shelves. He bent down, picked it up, and smoothed it out. "Hey, Frank," he said excitedly. "Check this out."

Frank rushed to Joe's side and leaned over his shoulder. On the paper were some hastily scribbled words:

The Queen of the Nile

20 November

4:00 P.M.

"I think Kimball wrote this," Frank said eagerly. "His handwriting was on the manila envelope he gave us at JFK, remember? This looks like it."

"Bingo!" Joe exclaimed. Then he glanced at his watch. "The twentieth is today, and it's almost noon now. That gives us four hours to find this Queen of the Nile place."

"It's probably some restaurant or bar in town," Frank pointed out. "It shouldn't be too hard to—"

*Bang!*

The door had slammed closed behind them. Joe and Frank whirled around—and found themselves staring at a tall, scowling man in a guard's uniform. In his right hand was a .32 caliber handgun, cocked and ready to be fired.

## Chapter

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## Thirteen

**J**OE STARED AT THE GUN and swallowed hard. "Um, Cole? What's our plan here?"

The guard marched up to Joe. Oh, great, Joe thought. He's decided to kill me first. He could feel every muscle in his body tense up as he tried to anticipate the guard's next move.

"*Eh da?*" the guard said suddenly, and yanked the piece of paper out of Joe's hand.

Without thinking, Joe yanked it right back. The guard's scowl deepened, and he raised his gun. Then he muttered something in Arabic.

Frank stepped forward. "*Anà ma bakal-limsh 'arabi,*" he said quickly.

Joe turned to his brother. "Huh?"

"I'm trying to tell the guy we don't speak

Arabic," Frank explained, keeping his eye on the guard.

The guard lowered his gun but only slightly. "What are you doing in this place?" he demanded in thickly accented English. "And what is that paper you hold in your hand?"

Joe searched his mind for a good explanation. Unfortunately, his mind seemed to be out to lunch. "Um . . . that is, we . . . well, we were looking for a friend's house," he said, smiling brightly. "That's right—we were looking for a friend's house, and we got lost. This is his address." He held up the piece of paper.

"There are no houses here," the guard said suspiciously.

"We see that now," Joe told him. "But you know how it is, right? We're just a couple of stupid tourists. We get lost all the time."

The guard waved his gun toward the door. "How did you get inside?"

"The door was open," Frank told him smoothly. "We just walked in."

The guard stared at the Hardys suspiciously. Joe couldn't tell if he was going to shoot them or let them go.

"You wait here," the guard said after a moment. Then he turned his back to the Hardys, pulled a cellular phone out of his pocket, punched in a few numbers, and began speaking into it in Arabic.

Joe realized that this was their chance to get away. For all they knew, the guard was sending for the police, and there was no way he was going to jail again.

Joe calculated that the guard was about five feet away. "Start talking to me," he whispered to Frank.

Frank frowned. "Huh?"

"Just do as I say," Joe told him urgently. "Start talking to me about the weather or football or something. And turn up the volume."

Frank looked at Joe as if he'd gone crazy. "Um, okay, well, so, it's pretty great out today, isn't it?" he said in a loud voice. "Makes me want to play football or something. Doesn't it make you want to play football, Coop?"

*Now!* Joe told himself. He backed up and took two running steps toward the guard. He knew that Frank's chatter would cover the sound of his own movements. Then, when he was just behind the guard, he leaped into the air and delivered a flying kick to the base of the guard's head.

*"Ooomph!"* With a loud grunt, the guard crumpled to the floor. Joe could see that he was unconscious, and he checked to make sure the man's breathing and pulse were steady. He'd be okay, Joe reassured himself.

Frank hurried over to the guard, too. Using

a tissue, he picked up the cellular phone and disconnected it. He also took the guard's gun and dropped it behind one of the boxes. "Nice move," he said, complimenting Joe.

"Piece of cake," Joe said lightly. "Okay, let's get out of here before whoever he was talking to decides to come after us."

The Hardys made their escape and headed toward town on foot. "Do you think that guard was working for Kimball or Mahfouz?" Joe asked Frank.

"It's a definite possibility," Frank replied. "But he sure didn't act as if he knew who we were."

Joe reached into his pocket and pulled out the piece of paper he'd found. "I hope he didn't get a close look at this," he said, concern showing in his blue eyes. "I mean, if he did and if we find this Queen of the Nile place, he might be there waiting for us."

"That would be a problem," Frank said grimly. "Let's just hope he didn't see it—or that he'll be too out of it to do anything about it."

Once the brothers reached downtown Aswan, they began combing all the restaurants, bars, and coffeehouses in town. "One of them *has* to be called the Queen of the Nile," Frank told Joe.

But by two o'clock they hadn't found a

single place by that name. After a while, they decided to take a break and sit down on a bench on the bank of the Nile.

Joe leaned back and stared out at the slowly moving waters of the river, at the feluccas and steamers sailing gently along. Then he turned to Frank. "Now what?"

"Now we think," Frank told him. "Maybe the Queen of the Nile isn't the name of a place. It could be a code phrase."

"Maybe." Joe closed his eyes. "Let's see: Queen of the Nile backward is 'Elin eht fo Neeuq.'"

Frank laughed. "Hey, how'd you do that?"

Just then a ship's horn sounded nearby. Joe opened his eyes; a large white steamer was sailing by, its name painted in English on the hull in bright red letters: *Jewel of Egypt*.

"*Jewel of Egypt*," Joe said to himself. Then he grabbed Frank's arm. "That's it!"

"Huh? What's it?" Frank muttered.

"Maybe Queen of the Nile is the name of a steamer," Joe announced.

Frank grinned broadly. "Hey, I think you're having one of your rare moments of intelligence. Come on, let's find a pay phone and check it out."

Nancy zipped her suitcase shut and glanced around the hotel room. "I think that's every-



thing," she said. "Oops, I almost forgot Cleopatra." She picked up a small cloth doll from her pillow. Frank had bought it for her at the Grand Hotel Misr gift shop in Cairo.

Bess was sitting on top of her suitcase and bouncing up and down on it. "I can't—seem to—close this thing," she gasped out between bounces.

Just then the door opened, and Frank and Joe walked in. "Hi, wives," Joe called out, then headed for the door to the Hardys' bedroom. "Love to stay and chat, but Frank and I have to pack and hop a boat for Luxor."

Nancy couldn't believe what she was hearing. "Luxor? What are you guys talking about?"

"We traced Kimball to a warehouse on the outskirts of town," Frank explained. "We didn't find him there, but we did find a piece of paper that said, in his handwriting, 'The Queen of the Nile, November twentieth, four P.M.' So we spent a couple of hours looking for a place by that name. Eventually we got an idea that *Queen of the Nile* might be the name of a steamer."

Joe stopped in his tracks and whirled around. "Excuse me. *We?*"

"Okay, so Joe got the idea. Anyway, it turns out he was right. The *Queen of the Nile* is a

steamer, and it sails for Luxor at four o'clock this afternoon. If our guess is right, Kimball is going to be on it, so we have to be on it, too." Frank added, "As far as we know, that slimebucket hasn't used the bomb. It might be just a matter of time, though, so we've got to catch him."

Nancy and Bess said nothing; they only stared wide-eyed at Frank.

"What?" Frank asked. "Why don't you say something?" He glanced around. "And why are *you* packing?"

"It's really weird that you two are going to Luxor," Nancy told him. "*We* have to go to Luxor, too. Darius's cousin told us he was on his way there as of this morning." She added, "Susannah's in her room packing right now."

"The coincidences sure are piling up," Frank said after a moment of thoughtful silence.

Nancy nodded. Frank was right—the coincidences really *were* piling up. Kimball's trail had intersected with Darius's route every step of the way: first Cairo, then Aswan, and now Luxor. Was it a fluke—or something else? Something planned?

Joe's voice interrupted her thoughts. "Hey, Frank? If we're going to catch that steamer, we'd better get a move on."

"Right." Frank turned to Nancy and Bess. "Why don't you two and Susannah come with us on the steamer? It'll be slower than a plane, but it will keep us all together."

"That's a great idea," Nancy said immediately. As much as she hated to admit it, she hadn't liked the thought of being away from Frank for the next few days. Plus, being on the steamer together would help the foursome keep up their married-couple disguise. "I'll tell Susannah. I'm sure she'll agree; the time delay at this point won't be more than a few hours."

By four o'clock Nancy, Bess, Joe, Frank, and Susannah were standing on the deck of the *Queen of the Nile*. They'd been able to secure three adjacent cabins along the starboard side: two doubles for the "couples" and a single for Susannah.

As the boat pulled away, Nancy gazed out at the bank of the Nile, at the dozens of waving spectators with their donkeys and camels. Then she turned to Frank, who was standing next to her. "So what's the plan?" she asked, keeping her voice too low for Susannah to hear.

"Joe and I are going to head for the purser's office to see if we can sneak a peek at the passenger list," Frank replied. "As soon as we

learn something, we'll meet you at our cabin to decide on our next move."

After Frank and Joe had gone off, Nancy, Bess, and Susannah split up to unpack in their cabins. As soon as Susannah had disappeared into hers, Bess sneaked back into the cabin she was sharing with Nancy. "It's amazing that she hasn't caught on yet," Bess said, dropping her suitcases on the floor. "I mean, about our not being two married couples and all that."

"I know," Nancy murmured. She had put her suitcases down and was studying their cabin. It was small but attractive, with wood paneling, potted ferns, and old Egyptian prints on the walls. There were two tiny windows overlooking the deck and the river beyond.

Bess began hanging up Nikki's dresses in the closet. "Nancy, which bed do you want?" she called out.

"It doesn't matter—" Nancy began, then froze. The door was open, and Susannah was standing there. She was staring at Nancy and Bess in total confusion. "Um, hi, Susannah," Nancy said weakly.

Bess whirled around, and her hands flew to her mouth. "Whoops," she said softly.

Susannah came in and closed the door behind her. "Did I hear you correctly? You two are sleeping in here?"

Nancy glanced at Bess, then at Susannah. "We might as well tell you," she said, sighing. "Cole and I aren't married, and neither are Cooper and Nikki." She added, "For that matter, those aren't our real names."

Susannah gasped. "What?"

"I'm Nancy Drew, and this is Bess Marvin," Nancy told her. "Cole is really Frank Hardy, and Cooper is his brother, Joe. The four of us are detectives. We were hired to work on a case by a man who asked us to impersonate the Addisons. But then something went really wrong..." She went on to tell the entire story:

By the time she finished, Susannah had become several shades paler. "You guys are—you're chasing some madman with a bomb?"

"I'm so glad you feel that way," Bess spoke up. "That's exactly how I feel, too. If these guys had listened to me, we'd all be back in the States by now, doing our Christmas shopping."

"We're not leaving Egypt until we find Kimball," Nancy told Susannah. "It's a matter of life or death. We have to keep him from detonating that bomb and killing people." She added, "And we really want to help you track down Darius and Leila."

Susannah smiled slightly. "I know. Thank

you so much for that." Then she shook her head and laughed. "This is a lot to absorb in one sitting. And here I was thinking you were on your honeymoon."

"That's what we wanted you to think," Bess said. "That's what we want everyone to think."

"Susannah, it's really important that you keep calling us Rebecca, Nikki, Cole, and Cooper," Nancy said earnestly. "That's what our passports say. If we get found out by the authorities, we might be thrown in jail."

"No problem," Susannah replied with a mock salute. "You can count on me. Those are the names I know you by, anyway."

Susannah returned to her cabin to finish unpacking, and Bess decided to take a nap. Nancy was a little sleepy, too, but she was too restless to lie down. She wanted to help Frank and Joe, rather than hang out in the cabin and wait for them to come back.

Maybe I'll take a walk around the boat and see if I spot Kimball, Nancy thought.

She slipped out quietly so as not to disturb Bess, then strolled along the deck. The boat was moving down the Nile at a leisurely pace, but already the scenery had changed. They'd left the bustling urban landscape of Aswan and entered a less populated area. On the banks of

the river were dried-mud houses, women carrying round jars on their heads, and oxen grazing on plants.

"Okay, now where?" Nancy said to herself. She glanced right and left and decided to go right.

As she walked along the deck, Nancy passed dozens of passengers, but no Kimball. She wondered if he might be in his cabin or in the bar, having a drink.

At the stern she spotted a figure in the shadows under the stairs, or companionway. His back was to her, but she could see that he had silvery black hair and a build similar to Kimball's. He was smoking a cigar. There was no one else around.

Nancy decided to move in for a closer look. Walking very quietly she headed toward the man.

Just as she reached the foot of the companionway, however, she heard a noise above her.

She glanced up—but not in time. Something crashed down on the side of her head, and a terrible searing pain shot through her. She saw dozens of bright flashing lights and then darkness as she crumpled, unconscious, to the floor.

## Chapter

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## Fourteen

**N**ANCY? Nancy, can you hear me?"

Nancy tried to open her eyes, but it was impossible. She felt as though she were drowning in a thick black bog.

"Wake up, Nancy. It's me."

A warm, familiar hand was holding hers. Who is it? Nancy wondered groggily. And where am I?

She tried to open her eyes again, and this time Frank's face swam murky into view.

"Frank?" she murmured weakly.

Frank broke into a smile. "Nancy—you're awake. You're okay." He leaned over and wrapped his arms around her and held her close.



Nancy closed her eyes for a moment, relishing the warmth of his touch. Then she pulled away guiltily. "Um, Frank? Where am I? And why does my head feel as if a bulldozer ran over it?"

Frank sat up. Nancy realized then that she was lying on a cot and he was perched on the edge of it.

"You're in the ship's infirmary," Frank told her. "About two hours ago Joe and I came by your cabin, and Bess said you'd gone off someplace. We all went to search for you and found you passed out on the deck under some stairs."

Nancy nodded slowly. It was all starting to come back to her. "I saw Kimball," she said. "Or at least I thought I did—he had his back to me. I started walking toward him, but when I got to the stairs I heard a noise above me. When I looked up, something hit me. . . ." She winced at the memory, and her fingers automatically fluttered to her forehead. It was covered with gauze.

"We found a brass urn near you. That's probably what hit you." Frank stood up and began pacing around the infirmary room. "It *must* have been Kimball you saw, and I'll bet you a thousand bucks the noise you heard on the upper deck was made by Mahfouz. He

probably spotted you going up to Kimball and decided you had to be stopped."

"Did you find their names on the passenger list?" Nancy asked him.

Frank shook his head. "We couldn't get to it. We tried asking the captain for it, but he said no. Then we tried breaking into the purser's office, but that didn't work out, either."

Nancy glanced around. "Where are Joe and Bess and Susannah?"

"They were here a while ago, when the doctor was taking a look at you," Frank replied. "He said you're going to be fine, by the way—as long as you stay in here overnight. He'll be back in a few minutes to check on you." He added, "Anyway, I sent Joe and Bess off to look for Kimball and Mahfouz. Although after what happened to you, I'm sure they'll stay out of sight."

Nancy sat up slightly and adjusted the pillows behind her. "How hard can it be to find them? There aren't too many people on this steamer, are there?"

"Actually, there are about two hundred fifty," Frank told her. "And we can't just go knocking on every cabin door."

Bess knocked on the door of cabin 25. "How many cabins have we hit so far?" she asked Joe.

"About twenty," Joe said, adjusting the stack of towels in his arms.

He and Bess had spent the last hour going from door to door, pretending to be distributing fresh towels. Bess had managed to steal them from a linen closet, along with a couple of uniforms. Unfortunately, hers fit better than his: his pants were much too short, and his jacket was about three sizes too big. He knew he looked like a major geek, and prayed that Dominique Moreau was not on the steamer. Also, if she or Isabelle saw him now, his cover would be blown sky-high, Joe realized.

"We've only hit twenty cabins?" Bess repeated. "It seems more like a hundred, and we're running out of towels. It's a good thing most of the passengers haven't been in their cabins."

"That's a *bad* thing, Bess," Joe reminded her irritably. "How's this plan going to work if Kimball and Mahfouz aren't in their cabins?"

"I guess," Bess grumbled. "All I know is, this is getting us nowhere, I'm tired, and it's way past my dinnertime."

She knocked on the door again. After a moment an elderly woman in an elegant black dress answered. Looking at her, Joe was overwhelmed by the shimmer of diamonds. She

was wearing a diamond necklace, bracelet, and earrings.

"*Awiz eh?*" the woman murmured.

"Um, we have some towels for you," Bess replied, handing her several.

The woman ignored the towels and frowned. "You do not speak Arabic?" she said in nearly perfect English. "How is it that you are working on this boat if you do not speak Arabic?"

Bess glanced at Joe frantically, then back at the woman. "Um—that is, um, we're exchange students," she said. She smiled and nodded. "Yes, that's it. And this ship has, um, a special program for hiring exchange students during the tourist season."

The woman arched her eyebrows skeptically. "So you are in Egypt learning Arabic?"

"Sure," Bess said. "Listen to this: '*aday?*' and '*ana gu'ana.*'"

"'How much is that?' and 'I am hungry,'" the woman translated. "That is as far as you have gotten in your studies?"

Joe stepped forward and put a hand on Bess's shoulder. "She's kind of a slow learner," he told the woman in a conspiratorial whisper. "My Arabic is far more advanced than hers, but I won't bore you with it. Besides, we have to get on with our work." With

that, he tipped his cap to the woman and gave Bess a not-so-gentle push away from the door.

Bess glared at Joe. "What do you mean I'm kind of a slow learner? How dare you insult me like that?" She stopped in her tracks and put her hands on her hips. "I'm really sick of being married to you."

Joe glanced nervously over his shoulder; the woman was still staring curiously at them. When she saw Joe watching her, she frowned and closed her door.

"Did you hear me, Cooper Addison?" Bess went on huffily. "I said—" Then she paused and pointed to the next cabin. "Hey, that's our cabin. Why is the door open?"

Joe frowned. She was right: the door to Bess and Nancy's cabin was ajar.

"Step back," he told her in a low voice, then put his ear to the door. There were no sounds coming from inside.

He pushed the door open ever so slightly, then peeked in. No one was there. "It looks fine in here," he told Bess. "Did you forget to lock it or something?"

"No way," Bess said indignantly. "I never forget to—" Then she gasped. "Oh, no! Cleopatra!"

Joe stared at her. "Huh?"

Then he saw it. On Nancy's bed was the doll Frank had bought for her at their hotel in

Cairo. Its head had been ripped off, and a note was pinned to its chest.

Joe rushed over to the bed and picked up the headless doll. The note read, "This is what will happen to all of you if you continue to follow us."

The next morning Frank woke up to the chirping of birds and the steady, gentle sound of the steamer chugging through the water. He glanced at his watch: six o'clock. Perfect, he thought, swinging his legs over the side of the bed. He wanted to get an early start on the day.

Not that he'd slept much. He'd spent most of the night in the infirmary, sitting by Nancy's side to make sure she was okay.

Holding her hand and watching her sleep, he'd been amazed by his protective feelings toward her. It was almost as though he'd crossed the line from playing her husband to *being* her husband. He knew it was just a crazy fantasy; he was in love with Callie, and Nancy was in love with Ned. Yet being "married" to Nancy for the past few days had had its effect on him. She was so much fun to be with, so smart, and so beautiful. . . . More than once, he'd had to resist the impulse to take her in his arms and kiss her.

He shook his head. He had more important

things to think about—like catching Kimball and Mahfouz. The note on Nancy's doll had definitely confirmed that Kimball, at least, was on the boat. Bess and Joe had spent hours looking for them the night before. They'd had no luck.

Frank had a new plan now.

Just then the sound of his brother yawning startled him out of his thoughts. "Joe?" Frank called out.

"Hmm?" Joe mumbled. "What time is it—midnight?"

"It's six," Frank told him. "Come on, we've got work to do."

Joe sat up and stretched. Then he ran a hand through his hair, which was sticking out. "What kind of work?"

Frank pulled some clothes out of the closet and started getting dressed. "We've still got to find Kimball and Mahfouz, remember? We're docking in Luxor at eight, and I want to make sure we're the first ones off the ship. That way we'll be able to watch all the other passengers get off."

"Sounds like a"—Joe yawned again—"good plan." Then suddenly he became more alert. "Hey, how's Nancy doing? Is she going to be up for this?"

"She's fine," Frank replied. "The doctor will discharge her after breakfast."

The Hardys spent the next hour and a half packing up, eating breakfast, checking Nancy out of the infirmary, and going over their plans. When the ship docked at Luxor, the five of them were the first ones off.

They all put their bags down on the dock and waited. It was a picture-perfect day: the sky was a bright azure, and the air was balmy and warm, almost tropical. The area around the dock was crowded with camels, donkeys, and merchants peddling jewelry, crafts, and rugs. Off in the distance, a line of taxis and horse-drawn carriages waited to take people into town.

As the other passengers disembarked, Frank made sure they had the perfect vantage point. There was no way Kimball would be able to walk past without their seeing him.

"There's the diamond lady," Bess said suddenly.

Frank turned to her. "Huh?"

"You had to be there," Joe told him quickly. Then his eyes lit up. "Hey, check out that guy behind her. Could that be Kimball?"

"Too short," Nancy said immediately.

Frank concentrated on watching the passengers, who were leaving the steamer in greater numbers now.

Nancy touched his arm. "See those two women in Islamic dress who are just getting



off?" she said. "Do we know them? They look familiar."

Frank glanced at them. They were tall and dressed in headdresses, veils, and caftans. Nancy was right—they *did* look familiar. "Maybe we ran into them in Cairo or Aswan," he remarked.

After a few minutes the flow of passengers slowed, then stopped altogether. Eventually one of the stewards roped the exit off.

"Hey, no way," Joe said in surprise. "That can't be it. Those guys couldn't have slipped off without our seeing them."

"Could they have left the ship in the middle of the night?" Susannah spoke up. "You know, by rowboat or something?"

"That seems kind of doubtful," Frank replied uncertainly. "But you never know." He added, "It's more likely that they were in disguise and we just didn't recognize them."

"But what about Kimball's triangular scar?" Bess asked Frank. "It's very distinctive."

Susannah frowned. "Did you say triangular scar?"

"Yeah," Bess replied. "Jonathan Kimball's got one on his left cheek."

"Tell me more about what this Kimball looks like," Susannah said, her voice oddly emotionless.

Frank stared at her curiously. "He's about

forty years old, six feet tall, medium build, tanned, with silvery black hair and gray eyes. The scar's right here"—he pointed to a spot on his left cheek—"and it's about an inch high."

"Why do you ask, Susannah?" Nancy said. "Did you see him on the steamer?"

Susannah shook her head. "No, I didn't see him on the steamer, but I know exactly who he is. And his name isn't Jonathan Kimball."

# Chapter

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# Fifteen

**Y**OU KNOW WHO KIMBALL IS?" Frank asked Susannah in astonishment.

Susannah nodded. "From your description, he sounds exactly like John Krieger. He's the head of the Aquarius Group in New York, where Darius and I work."

Joe frowned. "The Aquarius Group? What's that?"

"It's an engineering outfit," Susannah explained. "We specialize in underground water exploration."

Frank and Joe turned to each other. "The cuff link," they said at the same time.

"What cuff link?" Bess murmured.

"Remember the cuff link I ripped off Kim-

ball's sleeve?" Frank reminded her. "It had a hieroglyph on it that symbolized water."

Nancy turned to Susannah. "Do you have any idea why Kimball—Krieger—would be in Egypt?"

"The Aquarius Group is trying to get a huge contract with the Egyptian government," Susannah replied. "If they get it, they'll spend years looking for underground lakes in the Sahara Desert."

"Why does the Egyptian government want to do that?" Bess asked her.

"Remember Bishara Yasseen's story about the deterioration of the Nile because of overdevelopment?" Susannah said. "Most of Egypt's population lives along the Nile because it's the country's only major water source. So the riverbanks are dangerously overcrowded, and that causes critical environmental problems. If new water sources can be found, like underground lakes, then development can be shifted away from the Nile and into the desert."

Frank whistled appreciatively. "Wow. Sounds like a pretty ambitious plan."

"A U.S. senator, Michael Nasser, was trying to help the Aquarius Group get the contract," Susannah went on. "I heard he was withdrawing his support, but that was just a rumor. I'm not sure what the status of the project is—I

haven't been in the office since Leila disappeared," she added with a sad smile.

Nancy became thoughtful. "You know, all along, we were wondering why Darius and Krieger kept showing up in the same places at the same time." She turned to Susannah. "Is there any possibility that the two of them are working together on something illegal? I mean, we believe Krieger used us to smuggle a bomb over here, so he's clearly up to something bad."

"I can't imagine that Darius would be involved in anything having to do with bombs. He's not violent or politically radical." Susannah shook her head. "The reason Darius is here is to keep Leila from me. There's no way he and Krieger could be hatching a plot together."

Frank was silent. He wished he could be sure that Susannah was right. But what if she wasn't? he wondered. What if Darius was involved in some highly illegal and dangerous scheme with Krieger? Would he, Joe, Nancy, Bess, and Susannah be able to stop them in time—and to save Leila in the process?

Half an hour later Frank and the others had checked into a hotel in downtown Luxor and had settled into a two-bedroom suite. Nancy and Bess would sleep in one bedroom, the

Hardys in another, and Susannah would use the couch in the living room. After unpacking, the five of them regrouped in the living room to form a plan.

Bess sat down on the couch next to Nancy, picked up the remote control, and aimed it at the TV set. "I could go for a little relaxation about now," she said, yawning. "An old movie, some room service . . ."

"Sounds great," Joe told her wryly. "I'm sure the bomb thing can wait, and finding Leila, too."

A familiar face appeared on the screen. "Hey, it's that Bishara person!" Bess exclaimed.

"Turn up the volume," Frank told her, pulling up a chair.

Bishara Yasseen was standing in front of a luxurious-looking white building and speaking in Arabic. "What's she saying?" Joe asked Susannah.

Susannah listened for a few moments in silence, then gasped. "I don't believe it!"

"What?" Nancy asked her eagerly.

"Bishara is here in Luxor," Susannah explained. "And she's saying that Senator Michael Nasser is here, too, for an important meeting." She paused to listen as Bishara wrapped up the story, then added, "There's

A Nancy Drew & Hardy Boys SuperMystery  
going to be a banquet in Nasser's honor tonight at the Victoria Hotel—that's the white building you see behind her."

Nancy turned to Frank. "There has to be a connection between Nasser's presence in Luxor and Krieger's," she said excitedly.

Frank mulled this over. Nancy was right. If Nasser was having second thoughts about securing the water exploration contract for the Aquarius Group, then maybe Krieger was in town to smooth things over with the senator.

On the other hand Krieger probably had a bomb in his possession—a bomb he'd taken great pains to smuggle into Egypt. Also, he and Mahfouz had done everything in their power to get the Hardys, Nancy, and Bess off their trail.

What was Krieger up to? Frank wondered. And how did Darius Rashad fit in?

"What an amazing place," Nancy murmured. "I wish we had time to do some *real* sight-seeing."

She and Frank were walking down the Avenue of the Sphinxes to the Temple of Karnak. The avenue was flanked by two rows of small ram-headed sphinxes that seemed to go on forever. Nancy glanced briefly at her guidebook; originally the avenue had led all the way

from Karnak to the Temple of Luxor, two miles to the south.

She, Frank, and the others had decided to split up for the afternoon. Bess, Joe, and Susannah had gone off to try to track down Bishara. Nancy felt that the reporter knew more about Darius than she was telling. Also, Nancy thought, Bishara might have some information about Nasser, and he could be the key to finding Krieger.

Nancy and Frank, meanwhile, were hitting all the tourist spots in Luxor, starting with Karnak. Darius's cousin Tabia had mentioned that he planned to melt into the Luxor tourist scene until he could figure out his next move. With any luck, Nancy hoped that she and Frank might run into the father and daughter somewhere.

"You don't think there's any chance Tabia tipped them off, do you?" Frank asked, his concern evident in his tone. "I mean, what if they're not even in Luxor anymore?"

"That's a chance we have to take," Nancy replied. Just then she spotted a man and a little girl studying one of the ram-headed sphinxes. "Frank, look. Is that—"

At that moment, the man turned and stared right at her. Nancy tried to hide her disappointment. The man had the same coloring as Darius, but a totally different face.



"Close," Frank told her with a grin. Then he put his hand on her elbow. "Come on, we've got lots of ground to cover."

The two of them had no success at Karnak or at the Temple of Luxor, where they went next. Finally, late in the afternoon, they decided to go to the Valley of the Kings. They crossed the Nile to the west bank in a felucca, then took a taxi to the site.

The Valley of the Kings was the burial ground of the great pharaohs. Spread out over several miles at the edge of the desert, the valley contained a number of tombs with coffins, mummies, and elaborate funerary paintings. Nancy read in her guidebook that some of the tombs, especially the partially excavated ones, were closed to the public for safety reasons.

"Where do we start?" she asked Frank. "There's so much to see here."

"And it's getting late," Frank noted, glancing at his watch. "I don't think Darius and Leila will hang around here after dark." He pointed to the map in the guidebook. "Why don't we try King Tut's tomb first? It sounds cool, and it's close by."

As they started walking toward the tomb, Nancy noticed that there were very few tourists in the area—it was too late in the day. She

had a sinking feeling they wouldn't run into Darius and Leila.

Just as she and Frank got to the entrance of Tut's tomb, however, Nancy saw something out of the corner of her eye that made her do a double take. Standing near the entrance to another tomb was a little girl wearing a New York Mets cap. Holding her hand was a dark-haired man.

"Frank, that's them!" Nancy exclaimed. She cupped her hands around her mouth and called out, "Darius! Leila!"

The dark-haired man whirled around and stared open-mouthed at Nancy. It *was* Darius, Nancy noted excitedly.

Before she could move, Darius had picked Leila up and was running in the opposite direction.

# Chapter

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# Sixteen

**C**OME ON, FRANK—after them,” Nancy shouted.

She and Frank took off down the dirt path, kicking up dust as they went. The sun was beginning to set, and the last rays cast a dramatic blanket of gold over the desert horizon. Nancy knew they had to catch Darius and Leila before it got dark. Otherwise it would be nearly impossible to spot them in the vast, unlit valley.

“They went behind that tomb,” Frank yelled, pointing to the east. “Can you see them?”

“No,” Nancy replied breathlessly. “I’m sure they’re there, though.”

When they got to the tomb, which had a *Do Not Enter* sign posted in front of it, the father and daughter were nowhere in sight. "Oh, great," Frank muttered in frustration. "Now what?"

Nancy spotted something near the entrance to the tomb. "Oh, well, I guess we've lost them," she said loudly. Then she moved closer to Frank and whispered, "Look down there—two sets of footprints, big ones and little ones. I'll bet they're inside."

Frank's eyes lit up. "You're right." He glanced around. "You cover this entrance while I check to make sure there's no other way out. Then we'll go in and get them."

After circumnavigating the tomb, Frank gave Nancy a thumbs-up sign. Then, moving as quietly as possible, the two of them went into the tomb. The interior was dark, dusty, and cavelike; in the little light that filtered through the entrance, Nancy could make out colorful paintings and hieroglyphics on the wall, depicting some sort of ancient pharaonic funeral scene. Stashed in one corner was a pile of excavation tools and ropes. They were covered with dirt and looked as though they hadn't been touched in a long time.

In the center of the room were four large stone coffins. Behind one of them, Nancy

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could just make out the top of a New York  
Mets cap.

She and Frank exchanged a triumphant  
glance. Then Nancy called out, "Darius and  
Leila, we know you're here. We're not going to  
hurt you, okay? We're friends of Susannah's."

Leila's head popped up. She was grinning.  
"You're Mommy's friends?" she said happily.

Nancy smiled at her and nodded. "That's  
right, Leila."

Seconds later Darius stood up very slowly.  
He stared at Frank and Nancy for a long  
moment, and when he finally spoke, his voice  
was husky with fatigue. "Okay, you've got us.  
Now what are you going to do—have me  
arrested?"

"We have some questions to ask you,"  
Nancy told him coolly. "First of all, where's  
Krieger?"

At the mention of Krieger's name, Darius  
moved closer to Leila and put his arm around  
her shoulders. Nancy was struck by how pro-  
tective he was.

"What makes you think I know where  
Krieger is?" he asked suspiciously.

"You're working with him on something  
crooked, aren't you?" Frank said accusingly.

"That's why you're in Egypt. In the process,  
you thought you'd accomplish two missions at

once by kidnapping your daughter from her mother."

"You think I'm in league with Krieger?" Darius said incredulously. He shook his head. "You couldn't be further from the truth."

"What is the truth, then?" Nancy demanded. "You've got to tell us."

"Daddy, I'm hungry," Leila said suddenly. "Can we have dinner now?"

"Soon, honey," Darius reassured her. He gazed at her affectionately, then turned to Frank and Nancy. "I'll tell you the truth, only because I'm afraid you'll have me arrested otherwise. And that would mean certain death for me—for us."

Nancy frowned. Was he talking about himself and Leila? She recalled Tabia saying that Darius was hiding from someone, that he was in terrible danger. "Go on," she prompted him.

"I kidnapped Leila, not to gain custody of her but to save her and myself from Krieger," Darius began.

"What!" Frank exclaimed.

"Has Susannah told you about the Aquarius Group and the contract Krieger is trying to get with the Egyptian government?" Darius asked them. Nancy and Frank nodded. "Krieger has a top-secret plan. Once the contract is secured

and the project is under way, he plans to fudge the results and lie about any underground lakes the firm discovers."

"But why?" Nancy asked him.

"There's a group of individuals who want the Nile to remain the only source of water in Egypt," Darius explained. "Most of them are developers who own large tracts of land along the banks of the river."

Frank nodded slowly. "I get it. If the Aquarius Group finds underground lakes in the Sahara and the land there ends up being habitable, then these Nile developers would see their property values drop off."

"That's what they're afraid of," Darius said. "Anyway, that's why Krieger plans to lie about any lakes he finds in the desert. A lot of people are willing to pay him huge kickbacks for these services."

Nancy became quiet as she thought. "Sussannah mentioned a senator named Nasser," she told him.

Darius's brown eyes glittered. "This is the worst part. Nasser was involved in this whole scheme and was going to try to help Krieger get the contract with the Egyptian government in exchange for a portion of the kickbacks. But then he had an attack of conscience and decided to back out. He was even planning to tell

his friends in the Egyptian government to give the contract to someone else."

Frank whistled. "Krieger must not have been happy about that."

"Exactly right," Darius told him. "Krieger is a lunatic. He decided to assassinate Nasser to stop him from interfering with the contract and to keep him from revealing the scheme. And, of course, to pay him back."

Nancy turned pale. "Assassinate him—how?"

"I'm not sure," Darius replied. "But I have a feeling it's going to happen here in Luxor. I saw on the news today that Nasser's in town."

Frank and Nancy stared at each other. "The bomb," they said at the same time.

Darius glanced from Frank to Nancy. "Bomb? What bomb?"

Just then Leila tugged on Darius's shirt. "Daddy, it's dark in here, and I'm hungry. Can't we go?"

Darius fished through his pockets and pulled out a bag of dried fruit. "Here, why don't you snack on this? We'll go soon, okay? I promise."

"Oh, okay, I guess," Leila mumbled, taking the fruit.

Frank turned to Darius. "We'll tell you about the bomb later. But in the meantime



please explain why you kidnapped Leila and went on the run."

Darius sighed. "I learned of Krieger's scheme about a month ago, totally by accident. He and I were both working late one night. He was in his office discussing the whole dirty plot with someone on the phone, and I was unlucky enough to overhear most of the conversation."

Krieger must have been talking to Mahfouz, Nancy thought. "So what did you do?" she asked Darius.

"I confronted him, naturally," Darius said. "That was a bad move. He told me nothing was going to stand in the way of the biggest moneymaking project of his life, not even me. He said he would be merciful to me for now, because he thought of me as an old friend as well as a valuable employee, but if I ever got any ideas about talking to the authorities, he'd"—Darius paused and swallowed—"he'd see that Leila and I were . . ."

He glanced anxiously at Leila, who was busily eating the dried fruit, and didn't finish his sentence.

"That's awful," Nancy said softly.

"'Awful' doesn't begin to describe it," Darius told her. "I was desperate. I had no idea what to do. My only thought was to save

my daughter's life. So I came up with a plan—I would pretend to kidnap her from Susannah and head for Egypt. That way we'd be safe from Krieger, and I would have time to think about what to do." He added, "I tried calling Nasser several times, but his staff would never let me through. I think they thought I was a nutcase."

"Couldn't you have told Susannah what was going on?" Nancy asked him. "She's been really frantic."

"I know it was cruel to do what I did," Darius admitted. "But the alternative was worse. If I'd told her why I was taking Leila, then she would have been in danger, too. I needed Krieger to think she was in the dark about his scheme."

"What about Bishara Yasseen?" Frank asked Darius. "How does she fit in?"

"And Tabia and Hanif, too," Nancy added.

"Bishara was hiding Leila and me in Cairo," Darius explained. "And Tabia was hiding us in Aswan." Then he frowned. "As for Hanif, I never contacted him or even considered staying with him. I figured Krieger would have looked there first."

Nancy mulled this over. If Hanif had been out of the loop as far as his brother was concerned, then why had he acted so suspi-

ciously when Nancy and the others had met with him? And what about the rusty yellow car on the highway to Cairo Airport?

Her thoughts were interrupted by Frank's voice. He was asking Darius if he knew Dominique and Isabelle Moreau.

Darius shook his head. "Never heard of them."

"Daddy, I'm done," Leila said, handing him the empty bag. She had an apricot-colored stain on the corner of her mouth. "Now can we go?"

"None of you are going anywhere."

Nancy whirled around at the sound of the familiar voice. Standing at the entrance to the tomb was John Krieger, also known as Jonathan Kimball. His mouth was twisted into a blood-chilling smile. Right behind him was Mahfouz, who was clutching a 9-millimeter Luger.

## Chapter

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## Seventeen

**N**ANCY STARED AT THE GUN. We're trapped, she thought with a sinking heart.

Krieger tucked his hands into the pockets of his elegant blue suit. "This is very convenient for me, having you all here." He glanced at Nancy and Frank. "Of course, I have the two of you to thank for that. We've been following you all afternoon, and you led us right to my elusive friend Darius and his lovely daughter."

Darius put his arm around Leila and glared at Krieger. "You swine," he hissed.

"Daddy, why does that man have a gun?" Leila asked him anxiously.

"The man has a gun because he wants you to listen to what I have to say," Krieger told her.

"You know, Darius, we've been looking for you and Leila all over Egypt. We even got your brother to help us track you down in Cairo."

"That's a lie," Darius spat out. "Hanif wouldn't help you in a million years."

"Of course, we had to tell him . . . well, we had to tell him a slightly exaggerated version of the truth to get him to cooperate," Krieger went on smoothly.

Darius started. "What do you mean?"

"We told him that you and Leila were on the run from Susannah, who had become highly dangerous and unstable in recent months," Krieger explained. "We told him she'd threatened to kill you as soon as she found you. We convinced him that we had to track you down before she did because we had a safe hiding place in mind for you. I assure you, Hanif was most helpful."

It all made sense now, Nancy thought: Hanif's suspicious behavior, the "Hotel Nadr" entry in his desk calendar, seeing his car tailing Darius and Leila's to Cairo Airport. "Was Hanif the one who tipped you off when Darius and Leila headed for Aswan?" she asked Krieger.

"Precisely," Krieger replied. "Unfortunately, once we got to Aswan, Mahfouz and I couldn't find them. Besides, we had other

business to take care of, so we had to leave for Luxor."

"The *Queen of the Nile*." Nancy glanced at Mahfouz. "You hit me on the head with the brass urn, didn't you?"

"I saw you sneaking up on the boss," Mahfouz mumbled. "You had to be stopped."

Frank frowned at Krieger. "How did you and your bodyguard here get off the steamer the next morning?"

Krieger grinned. "You don't happen to remember seeing two rather large women in full Islamic dress, do you? That was us." He added, "As unhappy as I initially was to see you on the *Queen of the Nile*, I must say that your presence served a useful purpose. I happened to overhear Ms. Marvin saying that Darius and Leila had left for Luxor earlier that day. I knew then that I would be able to accomplish not one but two missions in Luxor."

"Two missions? What are you talking about?" Frank asked him.

"Why, killing Nasser and killing the four of you, of course," Krieger said pleasantly.

Leila burst into tears. "Daddy, make him stop talking like that."

Darius held her tightly. "Don't worry, honey," he reassured her. Then he narrowed his

eyes at Krieger. "Let us go, John. We're no threat to you."

"That's where you're wrong, Darius. You're very much a threat to me. And so are you two," Krieger told Frank and Nancy. "Ah, if only you'd returned to the States after your first night in Cairo and forgotten about me, you wouldn't be in this little dilemma, would you?"

"How could we ever forget that you used us to smuggle a bomb into Egypt?" Frank spat out. "The bomb you're going to use to kill Senator Nasser."

Krieger smiled appreciatively. "My, we are clever, aren't we? But you must admit, so am I. My plan to get that bomb over here was brilliant—absolutely brilliant."

"So you were the one who broke into our suite at the Grand Hotel Mizr that first night, right? You wanted to get the bomb components," Nancy said to him.

Krieger nodded. "Yes. Then, when Hanif told me that Darius was on his way to Aswan, I took the first flight there. Mahfouz went by train with the bomb components, to avoid the security check at the airport."

Frank frowned. If Mahfouz had gone by train, he would have arrived at least eight to ten hours after Kimball. So who had Kimball met at the warehouse?

"Who did you meet at the warehouse?" Frank asked. "Someone who gave a message to Mahfouz?"

Krieger raised his eyebrows. "How did you know about the warehouse?" Then he waved his hands dismissively. "Never mind that. Suffice it to say that tonight at the Victoria Hotel banquet, that traitor Nasser will enjoy his last meal. Mahfouz and I plan to bring, shall we say, an explosive end to the senator's evening."

Leila began sobbing even louder. "I want to go home!" she wailed. Darius stroked her hair and whispered reassurances into her ear. However, Nancy could tell by the grim expression on his face that he despaired of ever leaving the tomb alive.

As if reading Darius's mind, Krieger said, "It's quite appropriate that we're in a tomb, isn't it? And also quite appropriate that there are four coffins in here. Yes, indeed, that gives me a marvelous idea." He turned to Mahfouz. "There's some rope in the corner—over there, by the excavating tools. Tie these four up."

Mahfouz got the rope. Nancy was standing closest to him, so he started working on her first. When he realized he couldn't tie her up and hang on to his gun at the same time, he handed the weapon to Krieger.

Nancy realized in an instant that this was



her chance to act. Thinking quickly, she reached out and grabbed the wrist of Mahfouz's gun hand before he could complete the transfer to Krieger. At the same time, she delivered a sharp kick to his right shin.

"You witch!" he shouted, recoiling in pain.

Frank reacted immediately. He dived forward and tackled Krieger, and the two men tumbled to the floor.

The gun went off. Leila, who was again hiding behind one of the coffins with her father, screamed wildly.

The sound of the gunshot caught Nancy off guard. She glanced around for a split second, just to make sure that no one had been shot.

That was all the time Mahfouz needed to seize the upper hand. He grasped Nancy by the shoulders, twisted her around, and pointed the gun at her head. "No more moves like that, or I'll shoot," he warned her menacingly. Then he glared at Frank, who had Krieger pinned to the floor. "Get away from him now, or I'll shoot you, too."

Frank moved away from Krieger, keeping his eyes on Nancy and Mahfouz the whole time. Krieger leaped to his feet, brushed the dust off his suit, and frowned. "My, you two can be a bother," he remarked. "Nothing seems to faze you—not siccing Mahfouz and his friends on you and your brother in Old

Cairo, Mr. Hardy; not the phone call I made to you at the Grand Hotel Misr, Ms. Drew; not even the bit of surgery I performed on your doll on the *Queen of the Nile*—”

“You’re not getting away with this, Krieger,” Frank burst out suddenly.

“It’s too bad your brother, Ms. Marvin, and Mrs. Porter-Rashad aren’t here as well,” Krieger went on blithely. “That would have made everything so much easier. But we will take care of them at a later time.”

He turned to Mahfouz. “Give me the gun, Mahfouz, and this time do it right. Then tie these four up.” He added, “If any of you resist, I will have no choice but to shoot you. Understand?”

Nancy stared helplessly at Frank as Mahfouz handed the gun to Krieger, then tied her wrists and ankles. Mahfouz was especially rough with her; she knew he was punishing her. Frank was glaring at Mahfouz as though he’d like to kill him.

When Mahfouz had finished tying everyone up—he’d even gagged Leila with his silk necktie, to silence her—he turned to Krieger. “Now what, boss?”

“Now we place them in these coffins.” Krieger smiled pleasantly at Nancy, Frank, Darius, and Leila. “This tomb is only partially excavated, and it’s not open to the public. It

will be days, perhaps weeks, before anyone finds you in here. If they find you at all."

Nancy felt a chill slip down her spine. Darius was right—Krieger was a lunatic. There was no way they were going to escape from him now.

"The way I figure it, you will die in one of three ways," Krieger said. His voice was eerily calm, as though he were discussing what to have for dinner. "One, you will die of suffocation. Two, you will die of hunger or thirst. Three, you will die of fright." His gray eyes glittered. "And of course there's a fourth possibility. There is a legend that the ancient Egyptians placed radioactive objects in tombs, as well as highly toxic viruses capable of surviving for thousands of years. They took these measures to keep people from disturbing the eternal rest of the pharaohs and other nobles. Perhaps you will find something along these lines inside your new homes."

With that, Krieger lifted the lid off one of the coffins. A cloud of dust rose into the air, and the friction of stone against stone made a loud grinding sound. The inside of the coffin was empty.

"Darius, old friend, why don't you be the first?" Krieger suggested.

Darius pleaded with Krieger, "You can kill

me, but let my daughter go. She doesn't know anything. She can't hurt you."

"I'm afraid that's not quite accurate," Krieger said brusquely. "She's old enough to talk, isn't she? And I don't need any talkers ruining my plans." He turned to Mahfouz. "Come on, let's get on with it. We must be at the Victoria Hotel in precisely one hour."

Helpless, Nancy watched as Krieger and Mahfouz put Darius, then Frank, then Leila into the coffins and closed them up.

Then Mahfouz lifted Nancy and lowered her into the last coffin. She winced as her bare legs and arms touched the cold, clammy stone. Then he set the lid on top and slid it into place, erasing the last bit of light and sealing her in total darkness.

## Chapter

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## Eighteen

AS FRANK LAY in the dusty blackness of the tomb, he tried to quell the claustrophobia rising within him. Stay calm, he willed himself. Think of a plan.

Imagining little Leila lying just a few feet away, bound and gagged and no doubt terrified, helped center his thoughts. He had to get her out of that coffin, and fast.

He also wondered about Nancy, who was in the coffin next to his. He had a brief morbid thought that they would never see each other again, that this was it, and he was seized by rage and sadness. Now that death seemed so perilously close, he could no longer deny his feelings for her. If only he had told her—

Then he shook his head. Stop thinking about your love life, Hardy. Just concentrate on getting out of this miserable box.

Taking a deep breath to clear his mind, he assessed his situation. His hands were bound behind his back, and his ankles were tied together. He didn't have anything sharp with which to cut the ropes. So his only option, as far as he could tell, was to kick up at the lid of the coffin with his feet.

He bent his knees and took another deep breath. Then he counted to three and kicked, using his stomach muscles to propel his feet upward. It's a good thing I've been doing extra crunches at the gym, he thought wryly.

The lid of the coffin made a slight grinding noise but remained in place. Frank tried again and again, but after five minutes he'd managed to move the heavy stone slab only a centimeter.

Now what? he wondered.

He kicked one more time and heard a strange cracking sound. It took him a moment to figure out what had caused it: he had somehow damaged his watch.

His hands were pinned under his lower back, so he rolled over onto his left side to free them from the weight of his body. Then he groped around his left wrist with the fingers of his other hand and felt something jagged and

sharp. He realized that he'd broken his watch crystal, which gave him a brilliant idea.

Without wasting another second, he set to work. Manfouz had tied Frank's wrists together so that his palms were touching. Still lying on his left side, he slowly rotated his right palm over the back of his left hand so that his watch, with its broken crystal, was touching the rope on his right wrist. Then he began sawing the rope by rubbing it across the sharp edge of the crystal.

He continued working carefully and methodically. He knew he was cutting the skin on his right wrist—he could feel an occasional stinging sensation and a warm, oozing wetness that had to be blood—but there was no way he could stop. He had to saw through his bonds and get out of the coffin as quickly as possible.

Finally he felt the rope give. "Yes!" he cried out, and pulled his wrists apart with a strong tug. He was free.

He reached down and untied his ankles, then focused his energy on lifting the lid. It was only a matter of pushing hard, of applying all the strength he had in his back, shoulders, and arms. Within minutes he'd slid the lid down far enough so that he could crawl out of the coffin.

Once on his feet he took a deep breath, relishing the air in his lungs. Then, feeling his

way around in the darkness, he went from tomb to tomb, freeing the others—Leila first, then Darius, then Nancy.

After he had untied Nancy, he hugged her tightly. She pulled away quickly in the darkness. "Are you okay?" he asked.

"I'm fine," she said. He could hear her riffling through the contents of her shoulder bag. "Thank goodness I was carrying my bag with the strap across my chest," she said. "Otherwise, I would have dropped it, with all that was going on."

"What—" Frank started to ask.

"Ta-da!" Nancy said triumphantly, turning on a penlight. "Let there be light!"

Her expression became suddenly serious. "How on earth did you get out?"

He showed her his broken watch, which was covered with blood. "It's not so hot at telling the time, but it definitely came in handy today," he said with a grin.

Darius was comforting Leila, who couldn't stop sobbing and shaking. "We're safe now, honey," he was saying to her. "The bad men are gone."

"I want my mommy!" she cried, her lips trembling.

Darius looked at Nancy and Frank. "I want to take her to a doctor to make sure she's okay."



"Definitely," Frank said. "And Nancy and I need to go to the Victoria Hotel. Come on, let's get out of this place."

The four of them exited the tomb and made their way to the main road, with Darius carrying Leila the whole way. It was evening now, and thousands of brilliant stars dotted the vast desert sky, surrounding a delicate sliver of a crescent moon.

When they reached the main road, they were alarmed to find it totally deserted. There were no employees, no tourists, no cabdrivers waiting to take people back to the west bank of the Nile. The only sign of life was a man leading four camels into the desert.

"Now what do we do?" Darius asked Frank and Nancy.

"I have an idea," Nancy said. "Why don't we ask that man if we can rent his camels?"

Frank chuckled. "Perfect. They won't be as fast as a cab, but they'll beat walking."

After a few minutes they struck a bargain with the owner of the camels, a jovial man named Issa. He agreed to rent three camels to them and to ride with them to the river.

Issa showed them how to mount the camels. "The camel will get up on his back legs first, so hang on tight," he warned. "Otherwise you will be tossed over his head."

Soon they were all on their way to the Nile. Frank had never ridden a camel before and would have enjoyed it tremendously if he hadn't been preoccupied with getting to the Victoria Hotel and stopping Krieger and Mahfouz.

Would they get there in time? he wondered tensely. Because now not only was Senator Nasser's life in danger, but so were Bess's and Susannah's and Joe's.

Half an hour and a short motorboat ride later, the group finally reached Luxor. At the boat dock, Nancy gave Darius a key to their hotel suite. "We'll join you there as soon as we can. I'll knock on the door with two long and two short raps. That way you'll know it's us."

"Thank you," Darius said gratefully. He glanced at Leila, who was quietly plucking at the hem of her dress. "Come on, honey. Let's pay a visit to the hospital. Then we'll find a place where we can get you something to eat, okay?"

Frank and Nancy said goodbye, then hailed a cab. "The Victoria Hotel," Frank told the driver as he slid into the backseat. "I just hope we're not too late," he added to Nancy.

Nancy looked thoughtful. "What did Krieger say? 'Mahfouz and I plan to bring an

explosive *end* to the senator's evening.' That sounds as if he plans to detonate the bomb later rather than sooner."

Frank nodded. "That's good. That buys us some time."

Nancy noticed his right hand and turned it over in her own. "You really cut yourself up," she said softly.

He saw the troubled expression on her face. "I'm just glad I got out of there and that I was able to get you out of there, too," he murmured huskily. "I don't know what I would have done if anything had happened to you."

Nancy stared at him. In the darkness of the cab their eyes met and held. Frank suddenly felt as though his hand were burning where she was touching him. Without thinking, without wanting to think, he bent closer to hers, until his lips were just a heartbeat away from hers. . . .

Just then the cab came to a screeching halt, flinging Frank and Nancy forward. "Victoria Hotel," the driver announced.

Frank and Nancy turned away from each other. Both were blushing deeply.

Joe couldn't believe it when he saw his brother and Nancy get out of the cab in front of the Victoria Hotel. He waved his arms and called out to them. "Hey, guys! Over here!"

Frank and Nancy rushed up to him. "You're okay," Frank said, sounding relieved. "What are you doing out here? And why are you all dressed up?"

Joe glanced down at his tuxedo. "I thought this outfit would get me into the banquet, but it didn't work," he said ruefully. "They're checking invitations at the door. I told them I'd lost mine, but that didn't fly."

"Where are Susannah and Bess?" Nancy asked him.

"They should be here in a few minutes. They were taking a long time changing, so I came down on my own." Joe added, "Did you find Darius and Leila?"

Frank nodded. "And Krieger and Mahfouz, too."

"You did?" Joe said, incredulous. "What happened?"

"It's a long story," Nancy said. "The bottom line is, Krieger and Mahfouz plan to assassinate Nasser tonight with that bomb he had us smuggle over."

"What?" Joe burst out.

"Listen, Joe, we've got to get inside and stop them," Frank said tersely. "I think our first course of action should be to tell the people in charge of the banquet that their guests' lives could be in danger, not to mention Senator Nasser's."

The three of them hurried into the plush, crowded lobby. A set of double doors led to the banquet hall. Through the closed doors Joe could hear the sound of laughter and clinking glasses.

A voice barked out at them, stopping Joe in his tracks. A security guard was marching toward them.

He glanced reproachfully at Nancy and Frank's dirty clothes. Then he eyed Joe. "I remember you," he said suspiciously. "You do not have an invitation."

Joe held up his hands. "Look, we're not party-crashers. We're here because we know for a fact that two men named Krieger and Mahfouz plan to assassinate Senator Nasser tonight with a bomb."

The guard regarded him warily. "And how do you know this?"

"Krieger and Mahfouz told us," Nancy spoke up.

"They told you?" the guard repeated. Then he chuckled. "How old are you, anyway? Sixteen? Seventeen? Do you not have anything better to do than to spread stories like this?"

"But we're telling you the truth," Frank insisted. "You've got to clear the banquet hall and alert the police."

"We searched all the guests with a metal

detector, and no one had a bomb," the guard explained patiently. "Now, please—you are bothering me. Be on your way."

Frank, Joe, and Nancy exchanged glances. "Come on," Frank said finally. "We're wasting our time here."

When they got outside, they ran into Susannah and Bess. Susannah was wearing a black dress with a simple gold necklace, and Bess wore a red silk dress with rhinestone straps. Both had black capes over their shoulders.

"What's going on?" Bess asked. Then she stared at Frank and Nancy's clothes. "What have you two been doing, mud-wrestling?"

"Actually we were trapped in a couple of coffins," Frank said quickly. "But that's another story. Listen, here's the plan: Susannah and Bess, go to the nearest police station. Tell them that Krieger and Mahfouz plan to assassinate Senator Nasser here tonight with a bomb."

"*What?*" Susannah burst out.

"There's no time for details. Just bring the police here as soon as possible." Frank turned to Joe and Nancy. "The three of us will try to sneak into the banquet hall and find the bomb ourselves."

When Susannah and Bess had gone off, Joe

said, "Why don't we go around the back? There's got to be an employees' entrance, right?"

Frank nodded. "Right. Come on, let's check it out."

As they headed to the rear of the palatial white building, Nancy asked, "Did you and Bess and Susannah manage to track down Bishara today, Joe?"

"We spent hours trying to find her," Joe replied. "But when we finally did, she refused to see us. I think she's here now, though," he added. "There's a Channel Fourteen van in the parking lot."

At the back of the hotel they came upon an unmarked door. Just past it, a row of palm trees extended out from the building, and beyond that, Joe could make out a terrace illuminated by glowing torches. People were sitting at umbrella tables, talking animatedly and sipping cocktails.

Frank was trying the doorknob. "It's unlocked," he said in a low voice. "I think we should split up. That'll increase the chances that one or two of us will get in. Joe, since you're dressed up, why don't you try to get into the hotel through that terrace? Nancy and I will go in through this door."

"Sounds good," Joe said, starting toward the palm trees. "See you guys inside."

As Joe walked, he ran his fingers through his thick blond hair and straightened his bow tie. He hated being dressed up, but he knew that his tux was perfect for this occasion.

As soon as he stepped onto the terrace, a waiter came up to him immediately. "May I help you, sir?"

Joe cleared his throat. "Yes, I'm looking for, um, Lady Pennington. Could you take me to her table, please?"

"Lady Pennington," the waiter repeated. He glanced around the tables. "I do not recognize the name. Do you see her here, sir?"

Joe pretended to look around, then gave a loud sigh of exasperation. "She's late again," he grumbled. "Women." He added, "Oh, well, she's probably inside. I'll look for her there."

"Very good, sir," the waiter said.

Joe smiled at him, then walked confidently through the terrace doors and into a crowded bar area. "That was a piece of cake," he said to himself. "Okay, now—which way?"

He left the bar and entered a deserted hallway. Trying to orient himself, he decided that the banquet hall had to be to the left and headed that way.

Just then a set of swinging double doors burst open, and a young waiter came out carrying a large tray of fragrant meat-filled pastries.



"Excuse me," Joe said. The waiter stopped and stared at him curiously. "*Bitka . . . Bitkallam . . .* Oh, forget it. Do you speak English?"

"Yes," the waiter replied.

"Are you going into the banquet with that?" Joe asked him. The waiter nodded. "Perfect," Joe went on. "Listen, I need to get a note to Senator Nasser—he's the guest of honor."

The waiter shook his head. "I cannot do such a thing."

Joe pulled a couple of hundred-pound notes out of his pocket and held them between two fingers. "Please, it's important."

The waiter glanced at the money. "Give me the note quickly," he said in a low voice. "I must hurry with this food, or my boss will be most angry."

Yes! Joe thought excitedly. He reached into his pocket, pulled out a piece of paper and a pen, and wrote:

Senator Nasser,

John Krieger and an associate of his are here tonight. They plan to detonate a bomb. You are in terrible danger. Please let the guards know and clear the banquet hall now.

Joe Hardy

Joe folded the paper, wrote Senator Nasser's name on it, then handed it to the waiter along with the money. "Thank you," he said gratefully. "Make sure he gets it. It's really, really important."

The waiter nodded, then continued down the hall. On an impulse, Joe decided to follow him. Maybe I can get into the banquet through the waiters' entrance, he told himself.

He watched as the waiter, carefully balancing the tray over his head, went through a doorway at the end of the hall. Joe counted to five, then went up to the closed door and listened. He could hear the sound of applause.

He took a deep breath, then opened the door a crack. The large, lavishly decorated banquet hall was packed. Senator Nasser, whom he recognized from the TV program earlier, had risen from his table and was walking to the speaker's lectern. The waiter, who was approaching the senator's table, hesitated for a moment, then left Joe's note on Senator Nasser's empty chair.

Joe grimaced. Now the senator wouldn't see the note until after his speech. If he lives long enough to finish it, he thought grimly.

"I can't take that chance," Joe said out loud. "What if the bomb's hidden in the speaker's stand?"

He squared his shoulders, took a deep

breath, then burst through the door. Before anyone could stop him, he rushed up to the stage. Several people in the audience screamed, and he could hear the security guards shouting orders.

Once he reached the stage, Joe ran up to the lectern. Senator Nasser stared at him in horror, then backed away from him slowly, his hands in the air.

Joe ignored him, dropped to his knees, and began searching the lectern. He found what he was looking for immediately—and broke into a cold sweat.

Deep inside the cabinet of the lectern was the bomb. It was set to go off in less than four minutes!

# Chapter

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# Nineteen

**J**OE STOOD UP and grabbed the microphone. "Ladies and gentlemen, please listen to me. This is an emergency. Please clear the banquet hall as calmly and quickly as possible. A bomb has been planted inside this lectern."

Before Joe could get another word out, the room erupted into pandemonium. The guests were screaming and stampeding toward the exits, knocking over chairs and tables as they went. Senator Nasser shouted something to Joe, which he couldn't hear, then turned and disappeared into the wings.

Watching the frenzied flow of humanity, Joe suddenly spotted two familiar faces in the back of the room: Frank and Nancy. They

were struggling to detain two men in waiter's outfits. That must be Krieger and Mahfouz, Joe guessed, but he had no time to think about them now. He had to defuse the bomb before the whole place blew.

He took off his tuxedo jacket, rolled up his shirtsleeves, then got down on his knees again and studied the bomb, which was attached to the back wall of the lectern's cabinet. He noted that it had an electric fuse with a timer wired to link the battery terminals. When the timer hit zero, it would close the circuits and send a jolt to the primer charge.

He noticed three colored wires—black, red, and green. Joe guessed that he would have to cut one of the wires to defuse the entire mechanism. But he had to be incredibly careful about which wire he cut: Krieger could have booby-trapped the other two wires to trigger an explosion if one of them was cut instead.

Which wire should he go for? Choosing the wrong one could be fatal.

Black, red, or green? Joe asked himself. He wished that his brother wasn't tied up with Krieger and Mahfouz—Frank had much more experience with bombs than Joe did.

Meanwhile the timer was ticking away: one minute fifty-nine seconds, one minute fifty-eight seconds—

"Joe!"

He glanced over his shoulder. Nancy was onstage, rushing toward him. He noticed suddenly that the banquet hall was now deserted except for the two of them.

"I thought you and Frank were with Krieger and Mahfouz!" Joe called out.

"They got away," Nancy said. "Frank went after them. I thought maybe you'd need me more than he did." She knelt down beside him. "How's it going?"

"I have to decide which of these three wires to cut, and I have exactly—let's see—one minute and forty seconds to decide," Joe said tensely. "And if I cut the wrong wire, this entire place could blow."

"Maybe we should just get away from here," she suggested nervously. "Everyone has cleared out except for us."

"We don't know how powerful the bomb is, though," Joe pointed out. "It could bring the whole hotel down, and I'm sure it hasn't been evacuated yet." He glanced at her shoulder bag. "Do you have anything sharp in there, for cutting?"

Nancy reached into her bag, pulled out a travel sewing kit, and removed the tiny scissors. "Will these do?"

"Perfect." Joe took them from her and very

gingerly began scraping the plastic casing from the black wire.

"What are you doing?" Nancy asked.

"I want to see if there's any difference between the three wires besides the casing colors," Joe told her. He finished with the black wire and began quickly but carefully working on the others.

When he was done, Nancy said, "Look at the black and red wires—they're made of copper. But the green one seems to be made of something else, some grayish alloy."

Joe nodded. "You're right. I guess we'd better go for that one, then."

"Good idea," Nancy said. "You'd better do it fast, though. We've only got eight—"

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, here goes."

Focusing all his thoughts on the task at hand, Joe clamped the blades of the scissors gingerly around the green wire. Then he closed his eyes, snipped—and waited for the explosion. . . .

*Click.*

Joe opened his eyes. The timer had stopped. He and Nancy were still alive. The hotel was still standing.

"Yes!" Nancy cried, grabbing Joe's arm. "You did it!"

Grinning, he stood up and gave Nancy a big

hug. He'd never been so happy in his whole life. "We did it, Nancy. We killed the bomb."

"Hey, get your hands off my wife."

Joe and Nancy pulled away from each other and turned around. Frank was coming through the banquet hall toward them, followed by Bess, Susannah, and half a dozen police officers. Two of the police were leading Krieger and Mahfouz, who were in handcuffs.

"Hey, where'd you get those jokers?" Joe called out in surprise.

"Let's just say they ran into these nice officers and Bess and Susannah on their way out of the hotel," Frank said merrily. "Didn't you, guys?"

Krieger and Mahfouz just stared at him in stony silence.

Nancy knocked four times on the door of the hotel suite: two long, two short. Behind her were Frank, Joe, Bess, and Susannah.

"Why are you doing that?" Susannah asked.

"Who do you think will be in our—"

The door opened, and Darius was standing there.

"Darius!" Susannah sounded totally shocked. "What are *you* doing here?"

"Mommy, is that you?"

Susannah gasped, then rushed past Darius into the room. Leila was sitting on the couch,



playing sleepily with a stuffed rabbit. Nancy watched with tears in her eyes as Susannah swept the little girl up in her arms and hugged her tightly, murmuring her name again and again.

Still holding her daughter, Susannah turned to face the others. Her expression was puzzled. "I don't understand what's going on here."

"It's a long story," Nancy told her, stepping into the room. "I think maybe Darius had better tell it to you."

"Yes," Darius said softly. "I owe you an explanation, Susannah—and a thousand apologies." He turned to Nancy. "But first, I want to know what happened at the Victoria Hotel. Is Nassar okay? Did you catch Krieger and Mahfouz?"

Nancy nodded. "We found the bomb, defused it in time, and managed to catch Krieger and Mahfouz, too." She added, "They'd decided to stick around until the bomb went off to make sure no one found it and defused it."

"They would watch the bomb go off?" Darius asked incredulously. "But wouldn't they have been killed?"

"The bomb was only powerful enough to destroy the stage and the area around it," Joe explained. "So Krieger and Mahfouz were standing way in the back of the room." He shook his head. "What a pair of lunatics."

"We left them at the police station," Bess spoke up. "They were denying everything, but the police weren't buying it."

Everyone sat down, and Darius told Susannah about his nightmarish ordeal, starting with the phone call he'd overheard Krieger making a month earlier. When he'd finished, Susannah's face was drained of all color. "I wish you had told me all this before," she said, her voice trembling. "Maybe I could have helped you."

"That wasn't an option," Darius said firmly. "I couldn't risk putting you in danger, too. If Krieger had known you were onto him . . ." He reached for her hand and squeezed it. "I'm sorry you had to suffer so much. I know you were worried to death about Leila, but I didn't know how else to handle this so as to keep the three of us safe and stop Krieger, too."

"And Mahfouz?" Frank asked. "Did you two recognize him? Had you ever seen him around the Aquarius Group?"

Susannah and Darius shook their heads. "Who is he, anyway? Did you ever find out?" Darius asked Frank.

"One of the police officers told Joe and me that his name is Bès Mahfouz—" Frank began.

Bess gasped. "Bess? His name is Bess?"

"That's *B-e-s*, not *B-e-s-s*," Susannah ex-

plained. "It's a name from mythology—Bess was the god of happiness."

"I still don't like it," Bess said, pouting.

"Anyway, Mahfouz grew up in Cairo, but he moved to New York about three years ago," Joe went on. "Krieger hired him to be his muscle on this job and to keep an eye on us. That's why Mahfouz was at JFK checking us out, and at Giza, too."

"Mahfouz's brother lives in Aswan," Frank said. "The police there are questioning him now. It was his warehouse where Krieger went and eventually had his meeting with Mahfouz." He added, "The police are also talking to Azizi—you know, the jeweler in Old Cairo. He may be one of Krieger and Mahfouz's accomplices, too."

"I'm just glad this is all over," Darius said with a sigh. He gazed affectionately at Leila, who was falling asleep in her mother's arms, then turned to Frank and Nancy. "You two saved my daughter's life today, and mine, too. For that, I'll be eternally grateful."

"Me, too," Susannah added, tears welling up in her eyes.

Just then there was a knock on the door. "Maybe it's room service," Bess said brightly. "Did anybody order anything?"

Joe got up from the couch to answer it. "It's

kind of late for food, isn't it?" he called out over his shoulder. "It's almost midnight."

"It's never too late for food," Bess replied lightly.

When Joe opened the door, Dominique and Isabelle Moreau were standing there. "Dominique!" he exclaimed. "It's so great to see you!"

"May we come in?" Isabelle asked him curtly before her niece had a chance to say anything.

"Uh, sure." Joe moved aside, and Dominique and Isabelle waltzed in.

Frank stood up and glared suspiciously at the two women. "What are you two doing here?"

"Hey, why don't you chill out a little?" Joe told him huffily. He turned to Dominique with a grin. "Listen, are you busy right now? Why don't the two of us get out of here and have a late dinner?"

Bess jumped up from the couch, her hands on her hips. "Cooper, you're a married man," she fumed.

"No, I'm not," Joe said quickly. "Dominique, I'm not really married. I can tell you the truth, now that the case is over. See, we were hired to impersonate the Addisons by this guy—"

"Named John Krieger, a.k.a. Jonathan Kimball," Dominique finished. Her French accent was totally gone, and in its place was a flat midwestern twang. "We know all about it."

Joe's jaw dropped open. "You—you know all about it?"

"We're CIA," Isabelle explained briskly. "I'm Agent Liz Henderson, and this"—she nodded at Dominique—"is Agent Cindy Cahill. We were assigned to follow John Krieger here."

"So that's why you kept turning up wherever we were," Nancy said slowly. "We were tailing Krieger, and so were you."

Cindy tossed her long black curls over her shoulders and smiled at Joe. "Remember when you and your brother saw me at the Oasis Club with that man? I told you he was just a tourist asking me for the time, but it was really Krieger. I was trying to act friendly and get some information out of him, but he was totally uncooperative."

Frank shot Joe a triumphant look. "See? That *was* Krieger at the Oasis Club that night. This should teach you a lesson: I'm always right, and you're always wrong."

"Sure, whatever," Joe was staring at Cindy in total shock. "So Dominique—I mean, Cindy—you knew all along about the contract

Krieger was trying to get with the Egyptian government, and about Nasser, too?"

"The agency was aware of some of it," Cindy replied. "As for Senator Nasser, there will be a full investigation into his involvement in the matter."

"When you told us that you knew Charles Addison and some relative of the Addisons, were you telling the truth?" Frank asked Liz.

"Oddly enough, yes," Liz replied. "I met them at a cocktail party once." She glanced at Susannah and Darius. "I suspect the Agency will want to get your testimony. In fact, maybe I could ask you a few questions now."

Darius nodded. "Absolutely."

"Let me just put Leila to bed," Susannah said in a low voice. The child was fast asleep in her mother's arms.

"You can put her in our room," Nancy said, pointing to the room she shared with Bess.

Susannah carried Leila into the bedroom, and Liz sat down to talk to Darius. In the meantime, Joe took Cindy aside and began listing all the reasons why she should go out with him.

"I can't go out with you," Cindy told him with an apologetic smile. "I've already got a boyfriend. But I really think you, Frank, Nancy, and Bess should consider a career in the Agency. You were amazing on this case."

"Me a CIA agent? Yeah, right." Bess rolled her eyes and picked up the phone. "I'm calling room service. Anybody want anything?"

"No, thanks," Frank replied. He touched Nancy's arm and pointed to the balcony. "You want to get a little air?"

"That would be great," Nancy told him.

The view from the balcony was breathtaking: the moon and stars, the twinkling lights of Luxor, and the vast darkness of the desert beyond. There was a cool breeze, which made Nancy shiver.

"Cold?" Frank asked her, putting his arm around her.

"A little," Nancy admitted. She nestled closer to Frank, enjoying his warmth. "You know, I'm really glad we caught Krieger and Mahfouz and found Darius and Leila, too. But I wish . . ." Her voice drifted off.

"What?" Frank nudged her gently.

"I wish we didn't have to leave this place," Nancy admitted. She didn't tell him the reason why—that she wasn't ready to say good-bye to him, to the special fantasy they'd shared of being husband and wife.

Frank didn't say anything, but instead turned Nancy around so that she was facing him. He put his hands on her shoulders and gazed deep into her eyes. Nancy began trembling all over, and not from the cold. Her

thoughts were in a torrent—all she could think about was how desperately she wanted him to kiss her at that moment. . . .

And then in a mad, heart-stopping moment, he drew her closer and their lips met.

The kiss seemed to go on forever. When Nancy finally pulled away, she whispered, "Frank . . . that is, what I mean is . . . the case is over. We don't have to pretend we're a couple anymore."

"I wasn't pretending," Frank said slowly, taking her hands in his. "Were you?"

Nancy took a deep breath. "No," she said finally. "I wasn't pretending, either." Then she met his gaze. "We have to face reality, though. This relationship can't go anywhere. Ned and Callie are waiting for us back in the States."

Frank continued to stare at her for a long moment. "You're right, Nancy. As much as you mean to me, I'm in love with Callie."

"And I'm in love with Ned."

Just then Bess popped her head out of the balcony doors. "Come on in, guys. Room service delivered all this fantastic food, and we're having a big celebration party—" Then her hands flew to her lips. "Oops, am I interrupting something? Do I have bad timing or what? I'll go away, okay? Look, I'm gone." Her head disappeared, and the doors closed quietly.



A Nancy Drew & Hardy Boys SuperMystery

"Oh, boy," Nancy said, chuckling. "She's going to grill me about this all night."

"And what are you going to tell her?" Frank asked her.

Nancy smiled at him. "I'm going to tell her that you and I are friends—really *great* friends—and nothing more."

"Sounds good to me," Frank told her. He held out his arm. "Come on, Drew—how about we join the party? We've got a lot of celebrating to do."

Nancy grinned and took his arm. "You've got it, Hardy."

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